

Juvenile Detention and Shelter Best Practices Award Official Entry Form

Attach the form to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at www.pacounties.org.

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Title Community Connections Start Date October 2010

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:

Chair of the Board of County Commissioners Facility Chief Executive Officer Jara Heekbeek

Oversight Board (where applicable) Program Director

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Attach a separate program narrative document to the form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below.

- A description of the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort.
- A description of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county-wide planning strategies, etc.
- A description of expectations and measurable goals, including supporting data.
- A brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned.
- A brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project.
- A description of how the activities described in a project started in the past were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources.
- A description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any, and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program.

DATA ELEMENTS

Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data. Please attach any supporting data to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project.

Please attach supporting documents, forms or other information that support the award entry. Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type. Entries must be received by close of business on March 1, 2012. Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 25 - 27, 2012.

More information: Brinda Carroll Penyak, bpenyak@pacounties.org

Community Connections

Identified Need and Background:

In October, 2010, we underwent a significant transition at the Schaffner Youth Center. The detention portion of our program was closed and we became a shelter only facility. This change came about due to a steady increase in the county share of services and declining utilization. Our licensed capacity overall went from 48 beds to 24 beds. Roughly 50% of our direct care staff were furloughed. Juveniles in need of detention services are now transported to one of two detention centers, both centers are approximately an hour away.

When the detention program closed, we identified a need to re-energize our shelter program, expand our services, and create more partnerships with other agencies and with the community. In the past, our services were geared towards custodial functions, safety and security. Services were very short term in nature and provided for the immediate needs of the children in house. We wanted to enhance these existing services, but also strive to expand the continuum of services and build lasting community support. The transition transformed our organization. We successfully navigated a philosophical shift to shelter only services. Change management was critical to the project.

Project Description:

To begin establishing more community connections, the team at Schaffner met to discuss a strategic plan. We identified several areas of improvement and expansion of partnerships. We solicited feedback from residents, staff, supervisors, our Advisory Board, and customer agencies on areas for improvement and expansion. A stakeholders group was established with Dauphin County Children and Youth to identify their agency needs for dependent youth at the shelter.

Throughout this project, we've established the following community connections:

- We worked very hard to become more gender responsive to the youth in our care. We began facilitating the Girls Circle (a promising practice program) in July, 2011. This is a weekly support group for girls and gives them an opportunity to talk and learn more about themselves. We also began the Boys Council Program in October, 2011. This essentially is the male counterpart to the Girls Circle Program.
- We also have monthly Zumba classes and quarterly Mary Kay Programs for the female residents. Both of these programs are a great opportunity for the girls to enjoy being girls.
- We partner with Juvenile Probation and with two of the detention centers to enhance communication amongst agencies. We meet bi-monthly to discuss ways to provide a smooth transition for children that are moved from one facility to another. As a result of these meetings, if a child is on a privilege level at a detention center, this level is transferred to our shelter and they continue to enjoy these privileges. This is a benefit for the children because they do not have to "start over" earning a privilege level, but can keep their level at Schaffner.
- One of our main goals was to increase family engagement. We began a stake holders group, which consisted of representatives from the Dauphin County Human Services Office and Systems of Care. Three stake holder meetings were held in 2011 and focused on ways to increase family engagement. As a result, we have updated our parent information letter that is sent to every parent/guardian upon their child's admission. We also began to host bi-monthly Family Night Events. We have various guest speakers and this is open to all residents, parents, guardians, family members, and volunteers. Guest speakers thus far have included Denise Hill, Community Mobilizer from Communities That Care, and Patricia Gadsden, Director of the Life Esteem Program. Family Night is a great time for the families to come together with

their child and learn about community programs and resources that are available to them. We also offer facility tours after the session so that parents can see the shelter program.

- In December of 2011, we began a partnership with ResCare Workforce Development Services. ResCare provides group sessions to our shelter youth age 16 and older. These groups focus on job searches, interviewing, resumes, dressing appropriately for a job, how to maintain employment, and building competencies.
- The Book Club Program began in September, 2011. We partnered with Floyd Stokes aka Super Reader, a local author and speaker. Mr. Stokes holds book club meetings twice a week and enhances resident's reading and public speaking abilities. The program cost is funded through Title 1 educational funds.
- In December of 2011, we created a connection with Planned Parenthood. They provide groups to our shelter youth focused on healthy decisions, STD & HIV prevention, and pregnancy. This program has a minimal cost, which is funded through Title 1 educational funds.
- We established a connection with the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital and Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion. A special event was held in November, 2011. Residents participated in several physical fitness games provided by Dave Brixius of Explosive Sports Performance. Our youth then enjoyed a program from the Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion that focused on healthy eating choices.
- We enhanced our existing partnership with the Dauphin County Public Defender's Office with weekly groups for new residents provided by Michael Starling, Public Defender's Office Juvenile Advocate. Mr. Starling's group focuses on the court process, behavior during court and transports to court, and court room etiquette.
- In December, 2011, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Capitol Region conducted informational sessions during our staff trainings. These presentations were focused on how our staff can get involved and become a Big Brother or Big Sister. Thus far, we've had one staff member that has begun the process and hope that others will follow. The commitment required is extraordinary and we are very pleased that our first staff member has taken the initiative. We hope other will follow his lead.
- In July, 2011, we began to partner with a local barber, Dean Powell, to provide hair care services for the residents. Dean is typically at the shelter once a month. He also offers for youth to come to his barber shop in the community and gives them discounts on haircuts.
- We have always had outside field trips and community service projects for the shelter residents, however these events were infrequent, typically occurring once a quarter. In 2011, we expanded this schedule to include an outside field trip or community service project weekly. We partner regularly with the Children and Youth Office and attend their Independent Living Classes and Cooking Classes at the Giant Food Store. We have been able to take field trips to locations such as the Baltimore Aquarium, Philadelphia Blacks in Wax Museum, the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, and Zoo America. These field trips have been funded by Title 1 educational funds.
- We have also begun to offer in house community service projects to the residents. These special projects are coordinated by a staff member, Michael Larks. They typically involve a small group of residents cleaning/organizing a major area. By participating in this project, residents are able to earn hours towards their court-ordered community service.

Description of Expectations and Goals:

Our main goal was to find ways to re-energize our shelter program, expand our services, and create more partnerships with other agencies and with the community.

Description of Project Evaluation:

We evaluate our programs in a number of ways. We ask that residents who participate in the Girls Circle or Boys Council complete a survey before they leave Schaffner. Residents also complete an exit interview and are asked to rate our programs/volunteers. We solicit feedback from residents and staff. We also ask that partnering agencies complete satisfaction surveys regarding our services.

Description of Those Involved:

There were many people involved in this project:

- Dauphin County Board of Commissioners
- Schaffner staff and management team
- Schaffner Advisory Board
- Juvenile Probation Office
- Children and Youth Office
- Human Services Director's Office
- Abraxas Academy Detention Center and the Abraxas Youth Detention Center
- ResCare Workforce Development Services
- Planned Parenthood
- The Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital and Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion.
- Explosive Sports Performance
- Dauphin County Public Defender's Office
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Capitol Region
- Floyd Stokes Book Club Program
- Dean Powell, local barber
- Denise Hill, Community Mobilizer from Communities That Care
- Patricia Gadsden, Director of the Life Esteem Program
- Giant Food Store Cooking Classes
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency Center for Girls and Young Women

Description of Activity Start and Changes:

The project planning began well before the transition in October 2010. Areas of need were first established and persons accountable identified. Everyone involved has continued to follow up in their assigned areas to establish those partnerships and connections. We continue to meet with our staff, Advisory Board, and Stake Holders Group, to gather more ideas of further improvements and partnerships.

Description of Costs Associated with the Project:

Direct costs were minimal to begin this project. Planning and follow up time was the largest resource utilized. No additional positions were necessary as team members completed this during their normal schedules. Some programs, such as the Floyd Stokes Book Club Program and Planned Parenthood are funded through Title 1 educational funds. Memorandums of agreement were required in several cases which involved communication and planning. Training was also required and involved planning and resources.

As a result of this project and the connections we've established with agencies and the community, the community has recognized the changes. Parents, guardians, and the community are more aware of who we are and what we do. We've worked very hard to change our shelter program and we continue to seek opportunities to expand our services for the benefit of the children we serve.