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JUVENILE COURT CONNECTIONS – New Orleans Juvenile Justice Center Quarterly Newsletter – Vol. 3

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Message from the Chief Judge

Here at Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, one of our main goals is to ensure the safety and security of youth and their families in New Orleans. As you know, one of the threats to our communities is hurricane season. We would like to offer some tips to you and your

family on how to be prepared in case of a hurricane so that you can ensure the safety of your loved ones. We, in accordance with city officials, urge you to sign up for the NOLA Ready Emergency Alert System, and for any resident that requires special assistance during emergencies, to also sign up for the City’s Special Needs Registry. Most importantly, we encourage you to make a family emergency

communication plan and make sure that your loved ones are aware of the plan, should something ever happen. Lastly, put together an emergency supply kit that includes things such as flashlights, food, and copies of important documents that can be taken if you need to evacuate.

For more information on hurricane preparedness, we encourage you to visit the City of New Orleans’ website at:

www.nola.gov/ready/hurricane/.



OPJC Welcomes New Orleans Youth and Children Planning Board to New Orleans Juvenile Justice Center Youth

The New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board Executive Director, Karen Evans office is now located at the Juvenile Justice Center. Ms. Evans is excited to be a part of this great venue and states that *“it is important that we share a space devoted to the people who are devoted to juvenile justice reform. We need to be a part of that space to represent juvenile justice reform.”* Karen Evans, Executive Director

The Right Thing for Youth in Louisiana

By Ranord J. Darensburg
Judicial Administrator,
Orleans Parish Juvenile Court



In 2018 Juvenile Courts in Louisiana will begin to receive and adjudicate cases of 17 year olds suspected of misdemeanors and non-violent infractions of the law. As of 2020, all crimes for which 17 year olds are charged may be heard in Juvenile Court, with juvenile court jurisdiction eventually extending to 18 years of age.

In 2016 Louisiana joined the other 41 states that have removed 17 year old children from adult prosecution for minor offenses. Supported by research that indicates that 17 year old adolescents should not be held to the same standard as adults because of their diminished reasoning capacity, the Louisiana Legislature has increased the protected space in which juveniles can benefit from

resources and services to address their needs rather than risk harsh punishment and loss of liberty in the adult criminal justice system. In 2014 approximately 6,000 seventeen year olds were arrested as adults in the United States. Most of these arrest were for non-violent crimes, such as marijuana possession and property crimes. Arresting 17 year olds as adults for these minor offenses ignores current research and experience in dealing with adolescents and antisocial behaviors. Research has shown that “over 91% of juvenile offenders, even those who commit serious crimes, grow out of antisocial activity as they transition into adulthood.” - *Psychosocial Maturity and Desistance from Crime in a Sample of Serious Juvenile Offenders*. Steinberg, Cauffman & Monahan (2015). Incarceration of juveniles has not proven to reduce juvenile delinquency or improve public safety.

During the 2016 legislative session the Louisiana legislature passed the *Juvenile Justice Planning and Implementation Act*, more commonly known as the “Raise the Age” bill. This bill increases the age of juvenile

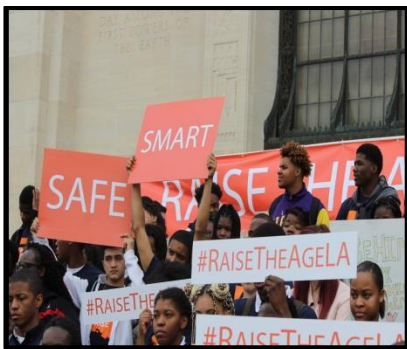
court jurisdiction to 17 years old in 2018 for misdemeanors and ultimately phase youth up to the age of 18 into the juvenile justice system by 2020.

While the “Raise the Age” bill does not affect the ability of the district attorney to charge teenagers (17 year olds) as adults for certain crimes, it does allow most cases to proceed in the juvenile justice system, where more attention is paid to the youth’s developmental status, family circumstances and the provision of resources to help court involved youth to develop into productive members of the community. The Center of Disease Control (CDC) has studied the effect on juveniles when they are subjected to the adult justice system. The CDC’s findings indicate that youth exposed to the adult system are more likely to reoffend and commit more serious crimes upon release.

Youth detained in adult facilities are at increased risk of negative situations and outcomes for which they are not physically or mentally prepared. Adult prisons often function as “Crime School” instead of “High School” where youths are likely to learn social rules and norms

that legitimate domination, exploitation, and retaliation (Bishop and Frazier, 2000 263-264; also Howell et al, 2013).

Current and accepted research suggests that youth up to even age 24 are more developmentally close to juveniles than mature adults. In order to move into adulthood successfully and become productive citizens, court involved youth often need far more support in the areas of education and employment. Raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction extends the flexibility of the Juvenile Court to impose interventions and diversion options tailored to the specific needs of this population of youth.



National studies have shown that "Raise the Age" is good fiscally and for public safety. A 2007 study by the Center for Disease Control concluded that transfers of youth to the adult criminal justice system does more harm than good. The CDC

found a 34% recidivism rate among transferred youth as opposed to youth adjudicated in the juvenile justice system.

As a direct result of SB 324 (Raise the Age), Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (OPJC) will likely see an influx of new cases, clients and families in the court system. Our goal is to follow our vision of providing a "court of excellence that effectively hears and disposes of cases" for the youth and families we serve. Since January of 2016 there have been over 355 seventeen year olds arrested in New Orleans. The vast majority of these arrests were for misdemeanor and non-violent offenses.

The "Raise the Age" reform legislation passed during the 2016 legislative session will allow seventeen year old youth in conflict with the law to receive protection such as faster case processing, and services that are developmentally appropriate. It is well established that locking youth up in adult facility is detrimental to youth, families and the community. It is an ineffective consequence to the actions of youth involved in the criminal justice system and contradicts the goal of

rehabilitating youth and protecting public safety. "Raise the Age" is the right thing for youth in Louisiana.

Upcoming Event

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court's

"Juvenile Justice Awareness Day"

August 2017

School Supplies
Resource Tables

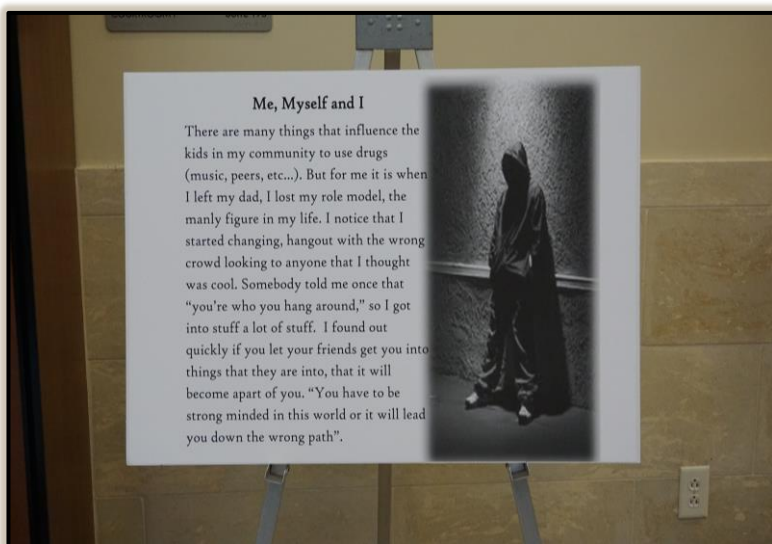
Food, Music

&

More

H.E.A.T. Program - Healing Voices Project Celebration

Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy for youth ended its six month pilot program with a Healing Voices Project Celebration. This event is designed to give a voice to young high risk black males, otherwise placed in a marginalized population, on the issues surrounding the negative effects of drugs and alcohol in their lives and community. Five participants graduated from the program. Parents and guests joined in as program participants were recognized with a plaque for their accomplishments. Each revealed their vision board giving insight into their vision for their future. The program coordinator, Joe Johnson and other staff and volunteers were also recognized for their dedication and leadership.



Vision board above was created by a youth program participant entitled, *"Me, Myself and I."*

Pictured upper left: Judge Desiree Cook-Calvin of Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and Judge Bobby Jones, Traffic Court. Metropolitan Human Services District Representatives (OPJC Community Partner), Hon. Steven Farber, Brenda Valteau, Chair of Mental Health Regional Advisory Committee, and Geraldine Turner-Warner, Director of Child and Adolescent Services.



CONGRESS MUST REAUTHORIZE THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND PREVENTION ACT

By Ranord J. Darensburg

After more than 100 years of protecting children from the harsh treatment and dangers associated with the adult criminal justice system, there is now more uncertainty than ever about the future direction of the juvenile justice system. Since the beginning, the juvenile courts have seen shifts in methods and practices for dealing with youth who are in conflict with the law. Courts have moved back and forth between rehabilitation and punishment. In this second century of Juvenile Court, there has been greater emphasis on effective early intervention programs. The Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974 (JJJPA) is the only federal statute that sets out national standards for the care and custody of court involved youth and families.

Signed into law by President Gerald Ford, the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974 sent a clear message that the federal government was in fact committed to the fair and equitable treatment of juveniles. The JJJPA establishes national standards for the care and custody of youth in conflict with the law, increasing public safety, and for making certain that youth are held accountable.

Currently, Louisiana continues to adhere to the guidelines set forth in the JJJPA. In 2016, legislation was enacted that rewards reductions in detention

"In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same." Albert Einstein

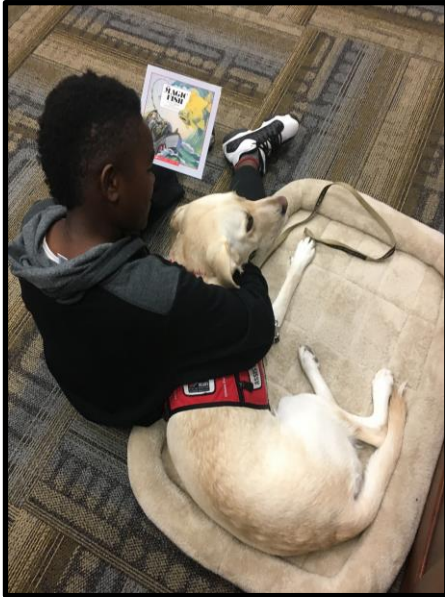
by offering financial backing for services that support youth intervention programs in their own communities. The financial incentive is made possible through monies saved keeping young people out of detention facilities. (Act 499) Legislation was also passed that guarantees all juveniles access to their attorneys throughout their involvement in the juvenile justice process (Act 617).

Congress must reauthorize the JJJPA so that state and local efforts can continue to assist with the reduction of juvenile delinquency and increase public safety. This is critical, as the JJJPA provides states with access to federal grant funds directed at putting a halt on the revolving door of youth in and out of the system.

Right now, Congress is poised to keep its promise to youth by making certain that this important piece of bipartisan legislation continues to protect those youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Representative Jason Lewis (R-MN) and Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA) have introduced H.R. 1809 in an effort to complete the unfinished business from the 114th Congress and reauthorize the JJJPA. Reauthorization will continue juvenile justice reforms that promote evidence based intervention programs and provide juvenile service in the least restrictive method possible.

**#JJJPA
MATTERS**

ORLEANS PARISH JUVENILE COURT TALK...



LA Endowment for Humanities Reading Grant Program

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court completed the Louisiana Endowment for Humanities Foundation “70” reading grant awarded to the “Tale-to-Tail Companion Reading Program.” The “Soixante-dix (70)” reading grant served over 146 youth at the court and the surrounding community. The Tale-to-Tail reading program offers a child comfort while reading with Suzie who alleviates stress and trauma while providing the child encouragement in a non-judgmental environment.

Suzie Nominated for “Hero Dog” Award with the American Humane Society

Suzie has been getting a lot of attention lately. In March she was nominated for the Hero Dog Award for the American Humane Society. Since her nomination, Suzie has been getting a lot of publicity. She has a recent article in the Times Picayune and was highlighted by “News with a Twist.” Please visit the following links:

<http://wgno.com/2017/05/02/suzie-is-new-orleans-only-courtroom>

http://www.nola.com/pets/index.ssf/2017/04/vote_for_suzie_orleans_courtho.html

<https://www.facebook.com/wdsutv/videos/10154276645106987/>

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Provides Parenting Groups

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court recently received funding from Metropolitan Human Services District Mental Health Regional Advisory Committee to provide parent workshops for court-involved and community families from the New Orleans area. These workshops will focus on the importance of essential skills needed to help parents develop positive relationships with their children. Topics include: positive decision-making, appropriate discipline, learning to apply positive behavior supports, and how to advocate for educational resources. Workshops are scheduled to start in June. For more information, please contact Katina Whorton, B.W. M.S. at (504) 658- 9599.



CONFERENCES

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges – PROJECT ONE CONFERENCE

Judge Tammy M. Stewart, Project ONE supervising judge and staff attended the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Project One” conference April 19 through April 21st in Reno, Nevada. Project ONE seeks to provide judges with guidance for supporting the needs of families and children no matter which jurisdiction of the courthouse. It’s an initiative with a holistic view of individuals and families, a life-course perspective on human development, and a focus on ensuring equal and coordinated access to justice regardless of presenting issues.

This year’s conference theme was “Charting the Course – Today’s Vision, Tomorrow’s Reality.” Each Project ONE site had to complete a presentation and Kimberly Beshears, Suzie’s Handler, presented our courthouse facility dog program and how she responds to court-involved youth experiencing trauma.



Kimberly Beshears, OPJC Court Programs Coordinator and Suzie’s Handler gives a presentation to Project ONE fellows on the benefits of having a trauma response dog for a Trauma-informed court.



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES



CONFERENCES

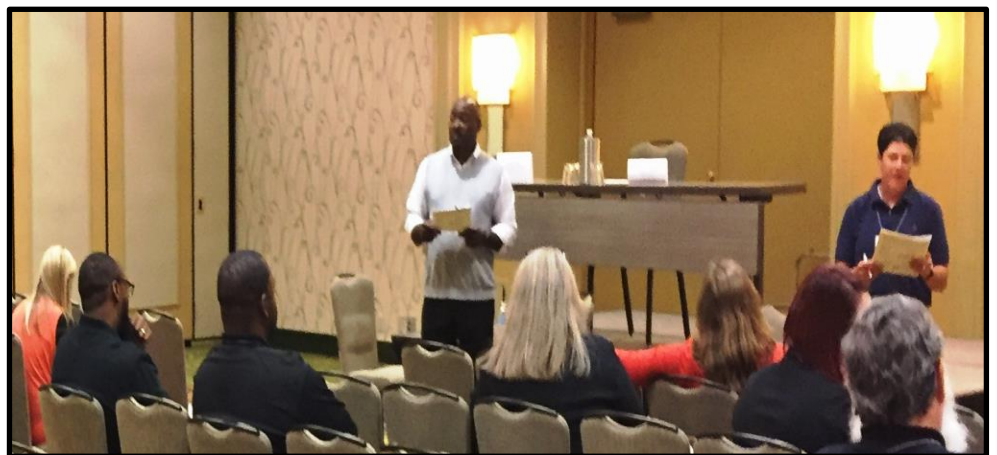
DRUG COURT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE

In May, a number of OPJC employees attended the Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference held in New Orleans. This three day conference focused on the most effective ways of operating a drug court to ensure the proper treatment of individuals who find themselves in it. It presented information on the new standards for juvenile drug courts as well as presented strategies to ensure that the juveniles receive the help that they need.



Drug Court Conference attendees: (left to right) Anika Harris, OJJ; Judge Desiree Cook-Calvin, OPJC; Donata Boutee (back left) DA's Office; Tiffany Boveland (front center) OPJC; (back center) Randy Cooksey, OPJC; Lauren Boudreaux, LCCR; Joe Johnson, OPJC.

Drug Court Coordinator, Joe Johnson, moderates the LADCP Annual Drug Court Conference breakout session with juvenile State Coordinators/Case Managers/Treatment Providers/Probation and Compliance Officers.



COURT YOUTH PROGRAM NEWS

GROWW's New Mentoring Program

GROWW has a new mentoring program for young ladies who have completed the program and want to return to serve as peer role models for other participants. Program Coordinator, Sondra Mullen and Program Facilitator, Kesana Durand, held the first "Mentor Retreat," in April. The retreat topics included *Peer Mentoring and the Role of a Mentor*.

Sisters on the Move

GROWW members participate in the inaugural New Orleans Sista Strut Walk. This 3k walk or run brings awareness to breast cancer. The goal of Sista Strut is to bring awareness to the issues of breast cancer in women of color and to bring attention to resources in the community for these women.

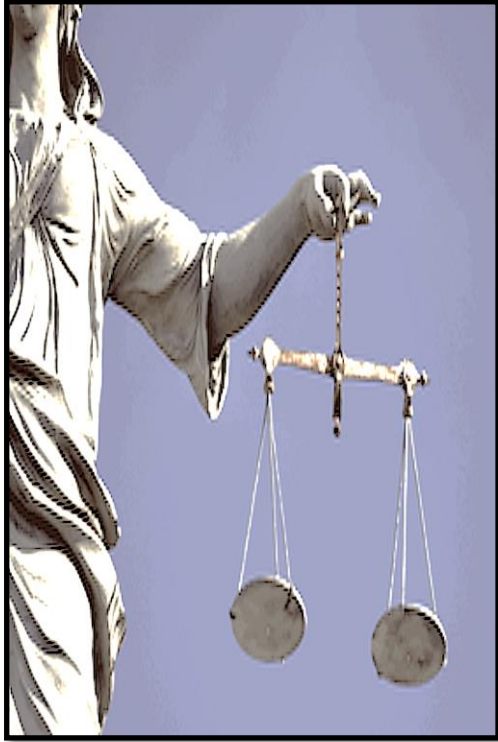


Girls Reaching Out Works Wonders



COURTHOUSE NEWS

THE RACIAL JUSTICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TASK FORCE



The Racial Justice Improvement Project (RJIP) aims to identify and reform policies and systems across the country.



Launched in 2010 by the American Bar Association and supported by a Kellogg Foundation grant, the Racial Justice Improvement Project (RJIP) is designed to identify and reform policies and practices that produce racial disparities using the RJIP task force model.

The New Orleans Task Force will work with Orleans Parish Juvenile Court to design a pilot diversion program for youth who may be referred to law enforcement by school personnel for criminal offenses within the school. These youth will be diverted to evidence-based community programs. Successful completion of the program may result in a dismissal of the pending charges.

The ultimate goal of the Task Force is to implement reform policy that will reduce disproportionate minority representation and racial disparities in the New Orleans juvenile justice system and ensure equal treatment of all youth who may come in conflict with the law. The Task Force is led by Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (OPJC) Chief Judge Candice Bates Anderson. Mr. Ranord J. Darensburg, OPJC Judicial Administrator serves as the RJIP Task Force facilitator.

COURTHOUSE NEWS

LAW DAY

Hosted by The New Orleans Links, Inc.

Invited by Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge Ernestine S. Gray



Links, Inc. members (left to right): Hattie Broussard, Clerk of Court; Hon. Candice Bates Anderson, Chief Judge; Hon. Ernestine S. Gray, Hon. Angelique Reed, Chief Judge, First City Court; and Hon. Tracey Flemings-Davillier, Criminal District Court



Students of Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School are pictured with The New Orleans Links, Incorporated

The New Orleans Links, Inc. hosted Law Day for students from Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School on May 12 at Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.

Links members conducted a presentation on “*Applying Due Process*” followed by a mock trial performed by students acting in the roles of attorneys, judges, and jurors.



Law Day is a national day to celebrate the rule of law and its contributions to the freedoms Americans enjoy.

Pictured left are Bethune students and teachers with judges and Suzie, OPJC’s courthouse facility dog.

COURTHOUSE NEWS

MAKING THE CONNECTION



Connecting with Our Youth

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Chief Judge, Candice Bates Anderson visited *Sylvanie Williams College Prep School*. Chief Judge received plenty of enthusiasm from students who were very inquisitive and eager to learn about the operations of a Court. She is pictured with school ambassadors Dominic Washington (left) and Shaunacie Bridges (right) who graciously gave her a tour of the school. Judge Anderson states that it is important for the OPJC to be visible in the community; she states: “*As leaders of the community, we have to connect with our youth; it can make all the difference in the world.*”



Reigning Supreme!

Ranord J. Darensburg, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, Judicial Administrator shown with *United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg*, at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. (March 2017)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Pinwheels for Prevention

The Pinwheels for Prevention is a public awareness campaign which motivates individuals to take an active role in prevention in their communities. On April 18th the New Orleans Children Advocacy Center joined Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana and planted pinwheels at Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and joining in was Suzie, the courthouse



facility dog.

Planting blue pinwheels is a way to raise awareness of the role we all play in supporting families and children. Suzie provides support to families daily at the courthouse. To learn more about **Community Pinwheel Gardens** please visit www.pcal.org. To learn more about Suzie's work you may visit

<https://www.facebook.com/wdsutv/videos/10154276645106987/>.



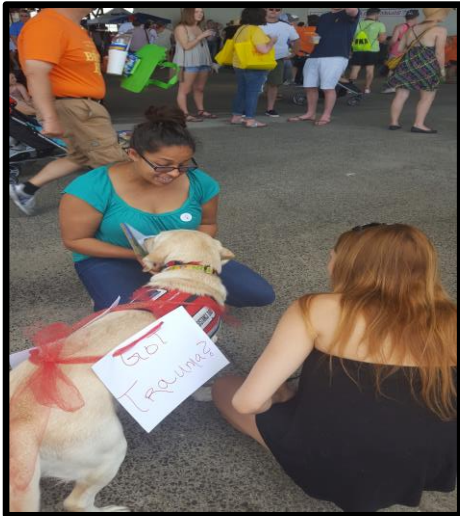
Trees for Life OPJC Employees Honored

The New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center sponsored *TREES FOR LIFE* at the Children's Hospital Calhoun Campus on April 21st. This a tradition of distributing trees in memory of each Louisiana child who has died as a result of abuse. Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge, Mark J. Doherty and Kimberly Beshears, Handler for Suzie, OPJC's Courthouse Dog, were both honored with a gift of a tree for all their hard work helping children who have been victims of abuse, neglect, and human trafficking. Storm Ehlers, OPJC's Court Attorney (*pictured below*) was also honored with the *Button Jar* for the children that came to the Children's Advocacy Center for trafficking or risk of trafficking.



For more information visit <http://nocac.net/trees-for-life/>

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



LA SPCA BRUNCH FEST

On April 22nd Suzie attended Brunch Fest NOLA, a new fundraiser for the Louisiana SPCA. It is a dog-friendly festival featuring vendors, live music, food, and a number of the pets from the SPCA that are looking for forever homes. The profits from the festival benefited the SPCA Animals Shelter.

National Awareness Dates

Emergency Preparedness Week – June 16 – 22

Visit <http://ehstoday.com/emergency-management> for more information.

National Safety Month – June is National Safety Month and focuses on reducing leading causes of injury and death at work, on the road and in our homes and communities. Visit <http://www.nsc.org/act/events/Pages/national-safety-month.aspx> for safety tips.



International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
The United Nations' (UN) International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking falls on June 26 each year to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society. This day is supported by individuals, communities and various organizations all over the world.



For questions regarding newsletter, please contact Tina Haines Brown, thbrown@gmail.com