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Youth Success Day Highlights Achievements of Juvenile Justice Youth

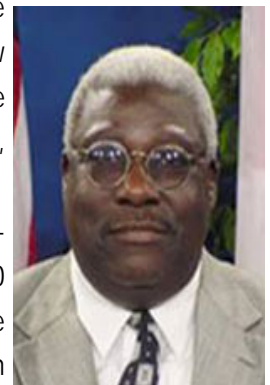
This month, agencies across the state serving juvenile justice involved youth joined together as part of annual Children's Week in Tallahassee. Children's Week also included Juvenile Justice Youth Success Day, held the week of April 4th to highlight the successes of DJJ youth. Emphasizing the strong partnerships between the Department of Juvenile Justice, private providers, faith based and community organizations, Youth Success Day included local events throughout the state.



In Tallahassee, 2011 DJJ Youth Success Ambassador, Michael Long, a former AMIkids youth, was recognized by the Governor. Michael currently attends the New College of Florida, where he serves as president of the student alliance. Pictured are DJJ Secretary Wansley Walters, Michael Long, and Cathy Craig-Myers, FJJA Executive Director.

New Deputy Secretary at Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

Robert Woody has been named the new Deputy Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice. Mr. Woody's expertise includes thirty years with the Florida Department of Corrections, including twenty-five years in the areas of probation and community corrections and five years as the bureau chief of community relations. A recent member of Governor Scott's Law and Order Transition Team, Mr. Woody holds a B.S. degree from the State University of New York and an M.A. Degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.



Mr. Woody was a co-founder of the Men Involved in Building Our Youth (MI-BOY) program that, approximately 20 years ago, mentored a group of 20-40 African American boys. "These boys are men now, and they're mostly crime free," Woody said. "Many of them stay in touch and are doing well. The program greatly, and positively, impacted their lives."

Mr. Woody is a current member of the Sun Bank board of trustees and past board member of the Alachua County Volunteer Crisis Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Stop Cancer Center and The Gainesville Community Foundation.

In a July 2008 interview with the Gainesville Sun, Mr. Woody shared how his desire to help others was inspired by his parents' and grandparents' volunteerism. "Growing up, I remember that my parents, and even my grandparents, were always out in the community volunteering, helping out in neighborhoods," he said. "I have a fondness for working with others and helping out wherever I'm needed to improve both individual's and the community's quality of life," Woody said. "I feel strongly that when much is given, much is required, and I've been given so much in life—it's necessary to give back."

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS TODAY

FJJA ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

JUNE 12-15, 2011
[LAPLAYA GOLF AND BEACH RESORT](#)
NAPLES, FL

1 (800) 237- 6883
Florida Juvenile Justice Association
\$139 per night

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS MAY 13, 2011

The FJJA Newsletter is published monthly

Cathy Craig-Myers, Editor
Lynn Redmond, Publisher

Deadline is the 4th of each month
Send your news to lynn@fjja.org

Maintaining Focus on Youth During Session

Keeping Services Funded a Challenge

Each year, groups representing advocates, provider organizations, volunteer groups, direct care workers, and concerned citizens descend on the Capital to keep the interests of vulnerable youth on the radar with the Legislative and Executive branches. This year has been no different, and yet it is different, with no stimulus dollars or trust funds left to raid, the investment we make in youth services is at great risk this year. In juvenile justice, at least, all eyes are focused on and much support has been given to Secretary Wansley Walters, to lead the way and show Florida how investment in delinquent and pre-delinquent youth will make a huge and lasting difference.

Governor Rick Scott Speaks at Youth Success Day

Highlighting the success that the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), its partners and providers have in turning around the lives of Florida's at-risk and troubled children, Governor Rick Scott joined DJJ Secretary Wansley Walters and legislators to celebrate DJJ Youth Success Day. "I thank Secretary Walters for sharing my vision to make Florida's juvenile justice system the best in the nation," said Gov. Rick Scott.

To see video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIJ9nmRwLCO>

See Secretary Walters Children's Week Interview



Secretary Wansley Walters discussed successes in Miami-Dade and how she plans to improve juvenile justice in her new position at the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. To see video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOHyIEGDo->

FJJA 2010-2011 Key Messages

Florida's juvenile justice system is one of the most comprehensive in the country and is always improving.

- We have nationally recognized programs and services throughout the state which serve the needs of each local community.
- Florida is a leader in prevention, early intervention and diversion services helping to reduce the number of youth from penetrating the system.

A responsive and balanced juvenile justice continuum is good for Florida and good for the youth who need services.

- Public safety is the most important goal, and a variety of services delivered locally ensure that the right service for the right youth at the right time occurs.
- Wise investments in the juvenile justice system pay off now and in the future and stop the flow of youth into the adult prison system.

Building on our successes saves dollars that won't be spent on prisons and will prevent future victims.

- Indicators point to the fact that today's adult prisoners are less likely to be in prison had they benefited from effective juvenile justice interventions at an early age.
- We can't afford to lose ground in these difficult economic times; we must build on what is working successfully.
- We must invest now or will pay more later.

Reports of Interest

U.S. Department of Justice-Highlights from Pathways to Desistance: *A Longitudinal Study of Serious Adolescent Offenders*

This fact sheet presents findings from a project that followed 1,354 serious juvenile offenders for seven years after they had been adjudicated or convicted and examined the factors that caused these young offenders to continue, reduce, or stop offending. It describes how longer juvenile sentences, community-based supervision and aftercare, and substance abuse treatment may affect reoffending. Most youth who commit felonies greatly reduce their offending over time. Longer stays in juvenile institutions do not reduce recidivism. In the period after incarceration, community-based supervision is effective for youth who have committed serious offenses. Substance abuse treatment reduces both substance use and criminal offending for a limited time. <http://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/230971.pdf>

Evidence-Based Practices for Children Exposed to Violence: *A Selection from Federal Databases*

This publication summarizes findings from federal reviews of research studies and program evaluations to help communities improve outcomes for children exposed to violence. It cites evidence-based practices that practitioners and policymakers can use to implement prevention services and activities for these children. Characteristics common across successfully implemented evidence-based practices include combined home and center-based approaches, multi-modal treatment approaches (the combination of more than one type of treatment such as individual, family, and advocacy services), and the parent-child dual approach.

[.http://www.safestartcenter.org/pdf/Evidence-Based-Practices-Matrix_2011.pdf](http://www.safestartcenter.org/pdf/Evidence-Based-Practices-Matrix_2011.pdf)

Campaign for Youth Justice: *Legislative Victories from 2005 to 2010 Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System*

A new study by the Campaign for Youth Justice shows that state legislatures across the country are getting serious about juvenile justice reform. In the last five years 15 states have passed nearly 30 pieces of legislation aimed at reversing policies that funnel a quarter of a million children into the adult justice system each year.

Ten states, including Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana and Nevada, have cut the number of offenses that get youthful offenders automatically transferred to adult courts. Three states have expanded the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts, so that children under 18 are no longer automatically prosecuted as adults. And several states have limited the circumstances under which young people can be housed in adult lock-ups before or after conviction. http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/CFYJ_State_Trends_Report.pdf

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: *When Did Making Adults Mad Become a Crime? The Court's Role in Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline*

The juvenile justice system in America is a paradox when it comes to promoting the welfare of our nation's youth. Decision makers continue to create laws and policies that treat children as adults and zero tolerance policies of many school systems across the country are a prime example of this paradoxical treatment of children. In an attempt to address discipline, school systems have adopted a "get tough" approach using out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and arrests. http://www.ncjfcj.org/images/stories/dept/jfl/todaywinter2011feature_1.pdf

Florida TaxWatch Center for Smart Justice: *Expansion of Civil Citation Programs Statewide Would Save Money and Improve Public Safety*

By utilizing Civil Citations for qualifying juvenile offenders, Florida can save a significant amount of taxpayer dollars now and in the future. To read report, [click here](#).

Reclaiming Disconnected Youths: *Uniting Left and Right for America's Future*

How policy solutions based on eight key conservative principles can enhance public safety and lower costs to taxpayers by effectively reducing juvenile delinquency and producing positive long-term outcomes for youths. To read report, [click here](#).

FJJA Nominating Committee Announces Slate for June Election of Executive Officers

As a reminder, incoming President Jon Howard will succeed current President Jeff Kaplan on July 1st, with Jeff Kaplan stepping into the past President position. Jim Hill, this year's nominating committee chair and past president, has announced the slate of nominees for the upcoming June FJJA Executive Officer elections. In the May Newsletter, we will have more information on these candidates:

- **President – Elect** – Nominees include Jim Hill, G4S Youth Services, LLC, Donnie Read, Twin Oaks Juvenile Development, Inc. and Frank Alarcon, The Henry and Rilla White Foundation, Inc.
- **Treasurer** – Nominees include Tadar Muhammad, Home Builders Institute and Jim Hill, G4S Youth Services, LLC
- **Executive Committee** – Nominees include Pam Alvarez, Bay Area Youth Services; Donnie Read, Twin Oaks Juvenile Development, Inc; Jim Slattery and Woodie Harper, both of Youth Services International; Chris Perkins, Sequel Youth and Family; Frank Alarcon, The Henry and Rilla White Foundation, Inc.; Tadar Muhammad, Home Builders Institute; Babette Hankey, Center for Drug-Free Living, Inc.; John Wilson, DISC Village; Jim Hill, G4S Youth Services, LLC

In the News

Tallahassee Democrat — *Senate realizes value in juvenile justice reform*

[Editorial by Senator Mike Fasano](#)

WFTV.com — *Orange County: State Overcharging for Detention* <http://www.wftv.com/news/27427550/detail.html>

St. Petersburg Times — *Fact, fiction merge in juvenile justice horror*

http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/CFYJ_State_Trends_Report.pdf

New York Times — *Fixing the Mistake with Young Offenders*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/opinion/04mon3.html?src=twrhp>

MSNBC — *Martin Lee Anderson's death sparked change in the juvenile justice system in Florida*

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15936990/ns/msnbc_tv

Youth Today — *White House Might Alter Juvenile Justice Spending Plan for 2012*

http://www.youthtoday.org/view_article.cfm?article_id=4679

The Crime Report — *Obama Drops Juvenile Justice Funding Overhaul Plan*

<http://www.thecrimereport.org/archive/2011-04-obama-drops-juvenile-justice-funding-overhaul-plan>

Texas Tribune — *Senate OKs Merging Juvenile Justice Agencies*

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/tx/7520483.html>

Tampa Tribune — *Lawmakers want civil citations for juveniles statewide*

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2011/apr/18/lawmakers-want-civil-citations-for-juveniles-state/news-breaking/>

Tallahassee Democrat — *Juvenile justice reform is one bright spot*

<http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20110417/COLUMNIST05/104170304/Mary-Ann-Lindley--Juvenile-justice-reform-is-one-bright-spot>

Upcoming Conferences, Workshops, & Events

The Girl Matters™ Training of Trainers Workshop, sponsored by NCCD Center for Girls and Young Women, May 9-13, 2010, Jacksonville, Florida. This week-long interactive workshop will challenge participants to improve outcomes and will provide research-based and proven strategies to meet the challenges and needs of girls. Space is limited. For registration information, workshop times and location, please go to www.justiceforallgirls.org.

Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Spring Conference, Council of SAGs' Meeting & Hill Day: "Fair & Equal Justice: Alternative Sentences and Sanctions for Youth," May 20-24, 2011, Washington, DC. This year's conference theme is "Fair & Equal Justice: Alternative Sentences and Sanctions for Youth." The conference will feature speakers, panels and workshops addressing current themes and trends in juvenile justice sentencing reform, touching on the needs of status offenders, juvenile life without parole, policies and reforms resulting in positive family and community outcomes, sentencing reform and efforts to reduce racial/ethnic disparities, and more. Click [here](#) to see a draft agenda and conference highlights.

For registration information, go to http://juvjustice.org/conference_11.html.

ARISE 5 Day Master Training, May 23-27, 2011, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Central Region Office, 4524 Oak Fair Boulevard, Tampa, Florida. To register or for more information contact ARISE at 1-888-680-6100, or e-mail answers@at-riskyouth.org

Progress Through Partnerships: 2011 National Gang Symposium, June 7-10, 2011, Orlando, Florida, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), offers opportunities to learn about innovative and successful gang-related programs and strategies and will provide the latest information on youth gang activities and trends from national experts. For registration information, go to <http://www.gangsymposium.org/>.

Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Abuse, July 27-29, sponsored by Florida's Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort, Orlando, Florida. For more information, go to <http://www.fncac.org/index.php?s=3043>

Health Care Reform Workshops, August 19, September 28, September 29, October 20, November 30, and December 16, is sponsored by The Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association. For topics and locations, go to [Health Care Reform workshops](#).

Making Lives Better: The Force That Unites Us, August 24-26, 2011, the 2011 Annual Conference sponsored by Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association and Florida Council for Community Mental Health, will be held at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, Florida. For more information go to <http://www.makinglivesbetter.org/>.



FJJA Upcoming Meetings

Board of Directors Meetings

- June 12-15, 2011
Annual FJJA Board Retreat,
LaPlaya Golf & Beach Resort, Naples, FL

Executive Committee Meetings

- **Monthly Conference Call** - 1st Monday of every month, 2 p.m.
- **Legislative Session** - Conference Call Every Monday, 2 p.m.

Upcoming Webinars

ARISE Webinars

- *Anger Management: Powerful Anger Solutions*, 11:30 a.m. April 20, 2011
- *Kindness and Happiness* - May 18, 2011
- *Everyday Negotiation Skills* - June 29, 2011
- *Listening to Each Other* - July 27, 2011
- *Assess Your Stress* - August 24, 2011
- *Manage Time, Manage Stress* - September 21, 2011
- *Just Say Om* - October 26, 2011

To register or for more information contact ARISE at 1-888-680-6100, or e-mail answers@at-riskyouth.org

Community Recover Supports for Youth, 1 p.m., April 22, 2011. To register: <https://rwjf.webex.com/mw0306lb/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=rwjf&service=6>

Widening the Door of Entry To Recovery for Youth People, 1 p.m. April 22, 2011. To register:

<https://rwjf.webex.com/mw0306lb/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=rwjf&service=6>

All Roads Lead to Family Involvement: Why and How to Work With Families of Justice Involved Youth, 2 p.m., April 26, 2011. To register:

<https://rwjf.webex.com/mw0306lb/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=rwjf&service=6>

Grant Opportunities

Anti-Gang Research Funding

Deadline: May 9, 2011

This Department of Justice program looks to promote the development of evidence-based programs, policies and strategies that effectively address at-risk and gang-involved youth. Eligibility is limited to states, units of local governments, tribal governments, nonprofits, for-profits, institutions of higher education. There will be multiple grants ranging from \$200,000 to \$1 million each. Information:

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/grants/solicitations/FY2011/GangFIRE.pdf>

Child Protection Research Program

Deadline: May 9, 2011

OJJDP supports programs to further the understanding of, and improve the response to, technology-facilitated crimes against children. This program seeks to expand the understanding of how technology is used to commit crimes against young victims. OJJDP will support a program of research on technology-facilitated crimes against children to inform policy and to support the development of effective responses to children at risk for exploitation and other adverse outcomes with funds authorized by 42 U.S.C. 5775. For information, go to [Child Protection Research Program](#)

State Juvenile Justice Formula and Block Grants Training and Technical Assistance Program

Deadline: May 16, 2011

OJJDP will award a cooperative agreement to an organization that will provide training and technical assistance to state and local juvenile justice formula and block grantees and subgrantees to assist them in planning, establishing, operating, coordinating, and evaluating delinquency prevention and juvenile justice systems improvement projects. Go to:

[State Juvenile Justice Formula and Block Grants Training and Technical Assistance Program](#)

Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program

Deadline: May 23, 2011

A growing number of communities have adopted multi-strategy, multi-disciplinary approaches to reduce the violence that has adversely affected youth, families, and neighborhoods across America. This program provides funding for localities to support federal, state, and local partnerships to replicate proven multi-disciplinary, community-based strategies to reduce violence. Go to:

[Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program](#)

Member News

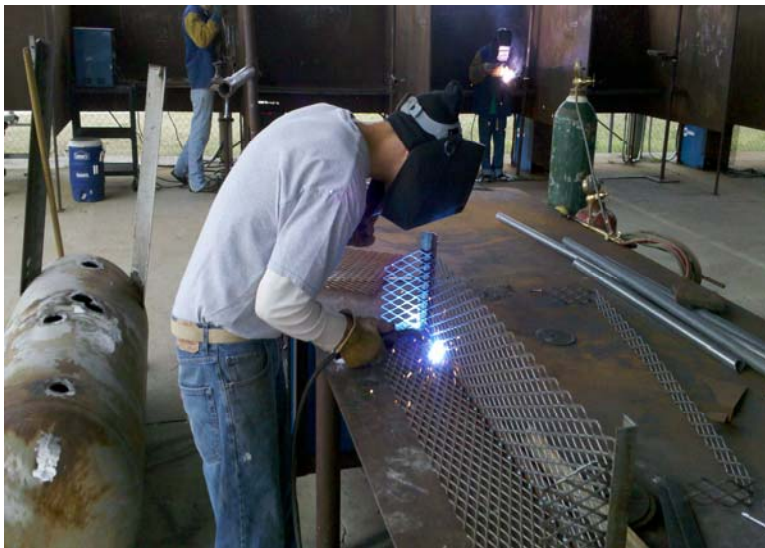
Teacher Making a Difference at Twin Oaks Vocational Academy (TOVA)

Under the direction of Executive Director Sean Golder, a teacher is making a big difference at Twin Oaks Vocational Academy (TOVA) a 148-bed, all male moderate risk residential facility in Bristol, Florida. His name is Mr. Lee Knowles, a welding technology instructor, who has a teaching philosophy regarding the boys he works with there.

When asked about the 3-year evolutionary process of his acclaimed program, he said, *"From the day I took over the shop to this very day, the #1 goal was to make these boys employable. Anybody can teach them how to weld to get a job, but I wanted to be the kind of mentor who could teach them to get and keep a job."*



When hired as the welding instructor for TOVA, Knowles had worked with a local construction company and his job was to hire or reject welders based on their ability to perform specific welding techniques. He admitted that he knew about welding but very little about being a teacher, especially to such a challenging group of students. *"I had the knowledge of what employers would be looking for to hire the boys,"* Knowles said, *"and that gave me a starting point."*



Mr. Knowles inherited a skeleton of a welding facility and decided that the boys' first task would be to build a place to work, teaching them to create something for themselves. Mr. Knowles, along with his welding vocational aide, Mr. Patrick Hodge, wanted to create a positive atmosphere. *"We wanted a fabrication shop that the boys could experience a "come to work" feel when they entered the class,"* Knowles stated.

Working with Mr. Knowles and Mr. Hodge, the boys began building work tables, torching stations, welding stations, a complete outfit/uniform/tool check-out room, and a storage rack to organize the steel. To increase morale, pride, and interest in the craft, they had the boys build a grill which was deemed the top prize in a

facility fundraiser. *"Not only did this grill project build a monetary nest egg for us to replenish our own program and the vocational budget as a whole, it was a proud day for my boys to watch that grill hook to someone's truck and drive away. It became real to them that what they made was valuable and would be used and appreciated by people other than Mr. Hodge and me."*

Not only did the productivity soar, but the language of the class changed as well. Rather than using phrases such as, "settle down," "no horse-playing," or "remember your eye wear," Mr. Knowles and Mr. Hodge use phrases such as, "You are suspended without pay for the rest of the day," or "You are fired!" and then used incidents as a teachable moment. Mr. Knowles and Mr. Hodge also rewarded the boys for a job well done with positive feedback, hosting class softball games, or grilling hamburgers on a grill made

Job shadowing is a huge part of the curriculum and an enormous incentive for boys to achieve in class.

Once the shop began firing on all pistons, Mr. Knowles decided to show-off the talent TOVA was growing by taking them on the road, while Mr. Hodge worked to hone the skills of the boys left behind in the facility shop. Mr. Knowles took students all over South

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Member News

TEACHER, From page 7

Georgia and North Florida to earn a range of salaries to include \$400-\$500 for one-day jobs and up to as much as \$2,500 for a week's work. To go the extra mile, Mr. Knowles took the students to a bank of their choice and assisted them in opening an account, obtaining a debit card, depositing their money, and teaching them how to manage their finances.

Mr. Knowles' teaching doesn't cease when the boys exit the program. He has successfully placed several students in full-time welding positions in Florida and Virginia. For those students who still need to sharpen their skills, Mr. Knowles, along with the program transition specialists, have assisted students in transitioning to technical schools such as Lively Technical Institute in Tallahassee, Florida and Taylor Technical Institute in Perry, Florida.

Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation helps with Scholarships

As an added bonus, Mr. Knowles and Mr. Hodge have incorporated the application for the Department of Juvenile Justice's Youth Investment Award as part of their employability skills curriculum. To date, TOVA Welding, hand-in-hand with the generosity of the Department, have awarded and provided approximately \$7,500 of welding starter equipment to exiting students who wish to pursue a career in welding. This aspect of his job is closest to his heart, because Mr. Knowles and Mr. Hodge have heard the naysayers grumble that welding is too expensive to keep up and maintain; the work force isn't really looking for welders as there are more viable, more needed industrial fields of study than welding, and on and on. Mr. Knowles disagrees. *"Well, like I tell my boys, if it's not a house, it's built out of steel, so it was welded. In one way or another, any building you see that's not a house has steel in it somewhere and it has to be welded. And, not only did it have to be built; it will have to be maintained. The job possibilities are limitless: construction sites, ship yards, oil rigs...limitless. Not only this, but what the boys are capable of doing is limitless."*

Twin Oaks Teacher, "Let's not institutionalize, but rather industrialize."

Without a doubt, the TOVA Welding Department is on the cutting edge of "industrializing" adjudicated youth. They've come a long way and have a long way to go, but the real advancements are best summed up by Mr. Knowles himself: *"Some days I sit back and watch the boys in the shop and am amazed at what I see. Mr. Hodge and I can only do so much. The rest is up to them. They have taken up the torch... literally. I see a boy in a welding stall and think to myself, 'Six months ago, before he came to TOVA, if Mr. Hodge and I put a blow torch in his hand, we would've been called crazy or accomplices.' Now, because of time, effort, and lots of patience, we are called teachers and mentors. In fact, we've changed that boy's life and the impact he'll make and leave on society. Welding, like life, really is a matter of timing and perspective."*

John Wilson of DISC Village Recognized For Service

John Wilson, former President of the FJJA Board of Directors and COO for DISC Village, Inc., was recognized by the Wakulla County Coalition for Youth for outstanding service, loyal commitment to the coalition goals, and dedication to the positive development of Wakulla youth and families. Pictured are John Wilson, left, and Detective Bruce Ashley.



Member News

DOVE Joins With Foundation for Florida's Graduates to Combat Bullying

The DOVE Vocational Academy and DOVE Intensive Mental Health Program have partnered with the *Foundation for Florida's Graduates* to implement the **SUPERB** program. Although originally developed for implementation in community schools, the Foundation's CEO Heather Beaven reached out to Twin Oaks Juvenile Development CEO Donnie Read, recognizing the benefit of this program for DJJ residential youth.



SUPERB stands for *Students United with Parents and Educators to Resolve Bullying* and is an innovative anti-bullying initiative that attempts to resolve the problem of teasing and tormenting by targeting by-standers. **SUPERB** is based on Marriage and Family

Therapy techniques, designed to bring students, teachers and parents together as a unified front to create schools that are safe havens.



Students United with Parents & Educators to Resolve Bullying

DOVE chose to integrate the **SUPERB** program throughout the entire spectrum of their daily programming. "After meeting with the staff we quickly realized that this would be a great program for our entire community, not just the education department", said DOVE Transition Specialist Cindy Clark, who also runs the Foundation's Jobs for Florida's Graduates program. "During the week we trained over 80 girls from both programs, as well as all our

entire staff. We are excited to see the effect that it will have on our community."

The **SUPERB** program, developed by dot com entrepreneur, Jeremy Ring, and Nova Southeastern University's Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, is designed to give by-standers the tools they need to safely intervene and defuse instances of exclusion, isolation and bullying. The curriculum is designed to end peer-to-peer harassment through empathy building, social responsibility, respect for cultural diversity, communication skills, and leadership. Extensive research shows that **SUPERB** has been shown to improve students' self-esteem, self-confidence, ability to handle bullying situations without violence, verbal skills, expression of feelings, self awareness and control, impulsive and angry outbursts, academic motivation and depression.

For more information on the **SUPERB** program or other grant opportunities to partner with *Foundation for Florida's Graduates* [click here](#).

JUST Program Building Houseboat on Apalachicola River

The **JUST** Program at Twin Oaks Youth Development is currently in the second phase of building a forty-two foot by twenty foot houseboat on the Apalachicola River. The Building Trades Vocations class has already completed eighty percent of the cook shed on site. Construction of the bunk house is currently under way, due to be completed by the end of August 2011.

All materials for construction were either donated by the local community, or have been purchased with funds generated by welding vocation projects. The welding class has been constructing personalized fire pits and outdoor cooking grills (sports teams, and other personal interests.) All materials for the fire pits and grills have also been donated to the class by the local community. Youth working on the house boat must pass a stringent water safety test and demonstrate superior swimming skills.



Once completed, the house boat will be incorporated into our behavior management program for overnight and day incentive trips.

Member News

G4S Youth Services, LLC

Avon Park Youth Academy Softball Team Wins Big

The Avon Park Youth Academy team participated in the Special STARS Softball Classic in March and came out victorious at the end. Partners in the local community played in the 12th annual coed slow-pitch softball tournament with individuals with disabilities at the Highlands County Sports Complex. There were six local teams competing in the tournament. The slow-pitch softball game featured four special athletes playing with three male and three female partners in the community on the field at all times.

Avon Park Youth Academy team, coached by Pete Zeegers, played Florida Hospital Heartland Division, coached by Jaime Bustamante, and won 14-4. They advanced to play Coffee News, coached by Andy Basso, and won 10-5. The final win was a close game against Duffer's Sports Grille, coached by Bobby Sexton, with the score being 8-7.

Duffer's took second place and Dee's Place, coached by Tim Ritenour, was third. "I had a great time at the tournament. I worked hard at it," said Bill Sobczak, a member of the Avon Park Youth Academy team and a Special STARS athlete. "I enjoyed playing with the people in the community."

In addition to winning an individual first place trophy for his team's win, Sobczak, of Sebring, also won the Best Special Athlete award. He even took first place in the Home Run Derby for the special athletes by hitting five home runs. "I felt proud and surprised that I won the Best Athlete award," Sobczak said. By playing in this tournament, "I learned to play as a team and work together."

During the opening ceremony, the Avon Park High School Air Force Junior ROTC presented the American flag followed by the national anthem sang by Carl Gillilan, of Sebring. Markevin Smith, a special athlete and member of the Avon Park Youth Academy team sang "God Bless America" after the national anthem.

Hastings Youth Academy Hosts Stop the Violence Event

Hastings Youth Academy hosted the third annual Donald Washington Stop the Violence Week in March. Donald Washington, completed a program at Hastings in 2007. Several months after leaving Hastings, Donald was brutally murdered. In the aftermath of Donald's murder, Hastings has established an annual Stop the Violence Week to honor him.

This year's event included keynote speakers including Colonel Frank Cyr, Corrections Director of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, Frank Talbot of the U.S. Attorney's Office—Gun Violence Program, Ben Clanace, Chaplain at Florida State Prison who ministers to death row inmates, a representative from the Betty Griffin House in St. Augustine, and Detective Reno Fells of the Palatka Police Department.

In addition, annually the Tri-County Stop the Violence Benefit Motorcycle Ride, led by law enforcement escorts from the St. Johns, Flagler, and Putnam County Sheriff Offices follows Stop the Violence Week. Participants are given scenic tours of these three counties by this group. This year's Ride will take place on Saturday, April 30. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. at Hastings with the ride scheduled to depart at 10 p.m. A donation of \$15.00 per is requested with proceeds going to Victim Advocate groups in the area. An additional \$10 donation will provide lunch and entertainment at the conclusion of the ride. For information, call Tammy Vaughn at 904-692-29200, ext 24.

Columbus Juvenile Residential Facility Performs Community Service

In March, residents of Columbus participated in a community outreach service project for the homeless. The event, sponsored by Love First Christian Center, was held at Lykes Gaslight Park in downtown Tampa. The residents with members of Love First distributed clothing and food. The residents learned the importance of giving back to a community and providing a service to those who are in need. Also the residents learned pro-social skills on how to work positively with others. Community service gives the residents an opportunity to utilize and to put in practice the skills that they learn in the program, which is empathy, sympathy and pro social skills.

Member News

G4S Youth Services, LLC



Hillsborough IRT Participates in USDOJ GoodGuides with Goodwill of the Florida Suncoast

Hillsborough IRT began participation in the Goodwill youth mentoring program, a national initiative that helps youth, ages 12-17 prepare for school completion, develop work skills, and identify career paths and transition to post-secondary opportunities. This program has been funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, GoodGuides program. Across the nation, 56 Goodwill facilities are participating with a goal of reaching 5,600 youth nationwide. All mentors must under-go a full background screen prior to beginning the program and any youth who participates must complete an application. Mentors were on site weekly during March conducting basketball camp. Joshua Bean, a former Hillsborough IRT employee, is Program Manager of the Goodwill, Hillsborough County GoodGuides program.

Martin Girls Academy Celebrate Women's History Month

Martin Girls Academy (MGA) celebrated Women's History Month by putting on a fashion show for the families of the youth in our program. Approximately 100 people attended throughout the day including families MGA staff, G4S corporate staff and Martin County School representatives. Most of the dresses and shoes were loaned to the girls by staff in the program and some families brought dresses for their daughters to wear. Overall, the day was a success that not only incorporated MGA's Seven Commitments, but also strengthened family bonds.

Palmetto Youth Academy Youth Finds Creative Way to Give Back

In March, a new student at Palmetto Youth Academy (PYA) donated his 10-inch ponytail to Locks of Love, a public non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children in the United States and Canada under 21 suffering from long-term medical hair loss from any diagnosis. Because of his unselfish act of kindness, the student received 20 hours of community service.

Cypress Creek Juvenile Offender Correction Center Spends Time with Motorcycle Ministry

Forty-four of the youth from Cypress Creek Juvenile Offender Correction Facility had the opportunity to watch a trick motorcycle rider perform during February. The event was sponsored by The Christian-based motorcycle group Running Out Of Time (ROOT). The group is part of a non-denominational Christian outreach ministry program that visits correctional facilities across the state to try to spread hope to those inside. The group spent time with the youth sharing their personal stories of hardship and success and discussing possible solutions to help the young men overcome their difficulties.

Dade Juvenile Residential Treatment Program Holds Workshop for Parents

In March, a workshop was held at Dade Juvenile Residential Facility for parents of youth currently residing at the facility. As the first workshop in a monthly training program, the goal was to teach parents skills that will help them be successful in encouraging good behavior and decreasing problem behaviors when their children transition home. Strategies for improved communication and behavior were presented.

During this first session, parents learned to provide positive reinforcement for positive behaviors. Parents also learned to recognize ways in which maladaptive behaviors are inadvertently reinforced. Future sessions will focus on specific tools for improving relationships and creating positive environments at home that encourage adaptive behaviors.

Member News

National Geographic Channel's *Rescue Ink* Stars Spend Time With Riverside T.R.A.I.N. Team

Article Written by John G., Riverside Youth

Joe Panz, "Big Ant", and Johnny O are the starters of an army of tattooed, motorcycle-riding street guys who make up *Rescue Ink*. The premiere of their reality television show on September 25, 2009 on the National Geographic Channel began to show people what these guys were really about, which is "educating" people about neglecting and abusing animals.



Although the men may top out at over six feet tall and have the muscles to go with it, the tough guys are as warm and fuzzy inside as the animals they help rescue. Joe Panz and "Big Ant", also known as Anthony Rossano, were the first of their crew of wise guys to make it down to Tampa Bay and spend Thursday, March 3rd lending the folks at the Humane Society a helping hand. On Saturday, March 5th the Humane Society of Tampa Bay held their annual "Bark in the Park" fundraiser at Al Lopez Park and had a special appearance from the guys of *Rescue Ink* to help raise money.

After the fundraiser the guys came back with the kids of Riverside Academy's T.R.A.I.N (Teens Reaching Animals In Need) Dog Program, who each made their own personal t-shirt with the slogan "T.R.A.I.N boys 4 *Rescue Ink*" and "Abusers are Losers," to Riverside Academy to share the background of their organization to the residents.

Each member of *Rescue Ink* had their turn of sharing their personal background story, the struggles they went through as a kid, and how they overcame their past and became a part of something positive. They told the residents the message they are trying to get across with their organization, which is "encouraging people to report animal abuse and neglect if they see it."

After a few stories and some positive advice to the residents, each kid had a chance to speak personally with each member of the crew. The follow day the T.R.A.I.N boys went out to Honeymoon Island for the Boxer Rescue fundraiser and were joined once again by the men of *Rescue Ink* to help raise money to support and help adopt more dogs. One of the events at the fundraisers was to have a chance, for a ten dollar donation, to get a picture with the guys of *Rescue Ink*. As the boys of T.R.A.I.N were getting their pictures taken, the men told the Riverside youth that "they were the future for these animals. "

We owe Sherry Silk and all the people of the Humane Society of Tampa Bay special thanks for making this happen. Also we owe a very special thanks to the guys of *Rescue Ink* for showing us that no matter your background, or what tattoos you may have, that if your heart is in the right place you won't necessarily be discriminated by everybody.

**Room Reservation
Deadline is May 13, 2011**

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