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Inside this Issue:

Legislative News	2
Legislative Agenda	2
News Worthy	3
Of Interest	3
In the News	4
Conference, Webinars	4
Important Dates	4
Celebrating Youth Success	5-9

Join Us for the 17th Annual Adolescent Conference!

The Florida Juvenile Justice Association and Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association have announced plans for the 17th Annual Adolescent Conference. The 2-day conference will be held at the Florida Hotel and Conference Center in Orlando on April 23-24, 2012 with an additional full day intensive training post conference planned for Wednesday, April 25, 2012. The Florida Hotel and Conference Center is located at The Florida Mall. Last year over 350 professional attended this conference.



This year's theme: *Unsung Heroes: Making a Difference* acknowledges the thousands of men and women who work every day with at risk youth. The conference offers an array of presentations and workshops that span the continuum of cutting edge topics which highlight promising practices, evidence-based programming, and clinical strategies that effectively serve at-risk, delinquent and substance involved youth. A wide range of sponsorship opportunities are available. [Click here for sponsorship information.](#)

FJJA Highlights Successful DJJ Youth- Christopher's Story - HBI/OYDC

Christopher C. was recognized as the 2010 Student of the Year at Okeechobee Youth Development Center. He serves as a motivational speaker for current youth and their families. Christopher has shared how important the ongoing support and guidance that was provided to him by Home Builders Institute and OYDC when he needed it the most. Since graduating, Christopher has received a high developed a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility.

His current employer, R.J. Sullivan Construction, quickly recognized his skill set and in a very short time selected Christopher as a crew leader, with a pay raise.

Christopher C. is now a traveling mentor with his boxing coach and gym, Omni Gym. The Omni Gym reaches out to kids in the community and encourages them to pull away from gangs and other negative influences throughout Broward County.



Holiday Message

As we prepare to spend time with our families this holiday season, we wish you happy holidays and best wishes for a wonderful new year. Enjoy the holiday; hug your loved ones and friends often and well. We look forward to working with you in 2012.

Cathy Craig-Myers
Lynn Redmond

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

More "Celebrating Youth Success" stories on pages 5-9



Legislative News

Going into Session: Florida's Financial Outlook

The Florida Legislature will again face the challenge of developing next year's budget with less revenue than originally projected, potentially \$2 billion. State revenue forecasts continue to be revised downward, with budget shortfalls possible through FY 2015. The biggest challenge facing the Legislature in upcoming session will be dealing with the explosive growth of Medicaid. The Medicaid budget has grown from \$10.2 billion ten years ago to \$21.5 billion this current year.

Governor Scott Releases Budget Proposal

Governor Scott has released his proposed FY 2012-13 budget with a heightened focus on education and jobs. The proposed budget is \$66.4B, a 4.6% reduction from last year (\$70B). His proposal includes an additional \$1B for K-12 education (an additional \$142 per youth) and he has indicated that he would not sign a budget that does not contain an increase in education funding.

Governor Scott's budget reduces the state budget by \$2 billion dollars and includes reductions of \$1.8 billion for hospital reimbursements, \$169 million in Medicaid by limiting hospital stays and emergency room visits, \$168 million in other health and human services cuts; \$48.5 million in the Medically Needy program; \$67.5 million by closing up to 6 prisons; \$23 million through privatizing inmate health services; \$51.6 million in other public safety cuts and a \$48 million in the state health insurance program.

In the public safety area, the Governor's proposal reflects a continuing focus on justice reform, and as the state sees an ongoing decline in Florida's crime rate. The proposal eliminates more than half of DOC excess prison bed capacity and recommends reinvestment of dollars in programs that result in reducing Florida's crime and recidivism rate, to include substance abuse treatment, education, vocational programs, and faith and character-based programs. In DJJ, the Governor redirects funding to front end services through cuts to DJJ vacant residential beds.

Governor Scott is also recommending the elimination of 4,491 state positions, with almost half of those positions currently vacant. The Governor's budget does support funding in critical areas, such as funding of substance abuse and mental health services.

FJJA Legislative Materials Now Available Online

<http://www.fjja.org/>



FJJA 2012 Legislative Agenda

No Funding Cuts to Juvenile Justice.

Over the last 3 years, DJJ reductions have amounted to close to \$167 million dollars. Last year, the agency took a cut of more than \$70 million dollars. As DJJ works to improve the system of care, maintaining current levels of funding will ensure further success in the reduction of crime and other related costs, and second, prevent the flow of youth into adult corrections, reducing the need for future prison construction by taxpayer dollars.

FJJA Recommends:

Taking into consideration the significant budget cut to DJJ last year, FJJA recommends that DJJ be spared further reductions in upcoming session.

Increase Investment in Community Based Services.

Investments should focus on the following program areas: 1) prevention, early intervention and diversion; 2) specialized residential; 3) transition, reentry and aftercare; and 4) education, career education and industry certification.

FJJA Recommends:

If the revenue picture improves – investing additional dollars in community based services and contracted rates will further enhance youth success, lower recidivism rates, provide maximum return on taxpayer investment and sustain proven programs.



News Worthy

Children's Cabinet Keeps a Continued Focus on Interagency Collaboration

The Florida Children's Cabinet continues to work to align policies, maximize scarce resources and better coordinate services across departments to work in the best interest of all Florida children.

To read the *Legislative Priorities of Children Cabinet Agencies*, [click here](#)

To read the *DJJ presentation to the Children's Cabinet*, [click here](#).

Justice Policy Institute (JPI) Questions Recent Decisions by Congress

With crime rates declining nationally, a recent briefing issued by the Justice Policy Institute questions the recent passage of the 2012 budget by Congress. In the briefing, *Federal Folly: FY2012 U.S. Department of Justice budget gorges on prisons, gouges juvenile justice*, JPI maintains that the focus on locking people up rather than focusing on reducing delinquency and protecting youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system will have a serious impact now and in the future. The briefing suggests that by not prioritizing successful diversion of youth from the path to adult corrections will likely result in more people arrested for lower level drug and other offenses and increased future prison populations.

"The 2012 budget reflects an disconnect between Congress and the states," said a spokesperson for the Justice Policy Institute. "With crime rates continuing to drop, state and local officials are reforming the policies that cause over-incarceration and finding ways to decrease their prison populations and corrections costs. It makes no sense to increase the prisons budget and expand federal enforcement when communities are safer than they've been in decades."

To JPI, the imbalanced budget will do little to reduce the burden of incarceration or improve community safety in a lasting and meaningful way. The U.S. DOJ budget proposes increases over 2010 levels for the Bureau of Prisons and the Federal Detention Trustee (which oversees immigration detention facilities). In addition, other federal policing – the FBI, the U.S. Marshal's service and the Drug Enforcement Administration – also will see increases over 2010 budget levels. While support to state and local law enforcement decreased, the percentage cut was far less than that exacted on the Second Chance Act and juvenile justice programs, which were cut 37 percent over 2010 levels. To read briefing, [click here](#)

Of Interest

New Report shows Crucial Role of Foundations in Juvenile Justice Reforms

A new report shows how a collaborative effort between local D.C. foundations and national funders supported the transformation of the District's juvenile justice agency. The report, *Notorious to Notable*, describes how the District of Columbia's juvenile agency was transformed from one of the worst to one of the most notable, being named as one of the Top 50 Innovations in American Government by the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. To read report, [click here](#).

New Report Identifies Concerns of Health Care Provided in the Juvenile Justice System

Youth in the juvenile justice system are at high-risk for physical, mental and developmental health issues according to a new policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Adolescence. The report highlights concern by pediatricians that many youth do not receive the level of health care they need, upon entrance into the juvenile justice system. The report represents the first update in 10 years to the *Health Care for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*. To read report, [click here](#).



In the News

Texas Times: [New Youth Agency Taking Shape as Two Close](#)

Huffington Post: [D.C.'s Juvenile Justice System Sees Real Change](#)

The Sacramento Bee: [Are Strict Suspension Rules Hurting Students?](#)

Miami Herald: [Scott's Office will Review Spending by Juvenile Program](#)

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange:

[Right on Crime and the Conservative Focus on Juvenile Justice](#)

Delaware Online: [Juvenile Agency Shifts its Efforts](#)

Chicago Tribune: [Illinois' Juvenile Justice System is Failing, State Report Says](#)

Kansas.com: [Are Reforms Justified?](#)

Right on Crime.com: [The Tide Turns Against Zero Tolerance](#)

Wall Street Journal: [DOJ Steps up oversight of Juvenile Justice](#)

Upcoming Conferences, Workshops, & Events

5 Day ARISE Master Training - *Drop It At The Door*, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, January 9-13, 2012 Palm Beach Gardens. To register or for more information contact ARISE at 1-888-680-6100, or e-mail answers@at-riskyouth.org or go to www.at-riskyouth.org.

2 Day ARISE Life Skills Training, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, February 13-14, 2012, Seacoast National Bank 3001 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens. To register or for more information contact ARISE at 1-888-680-6100, or e-mail answers@at-riskyouth.org or go to www.at-riskyouth.org.

33rd Annual Training Institute on Behavioral Health and Addictive Disorders

February 13-16, 2012 Clearwater Beach, [click here](#) for registration and more information or call 800-441-5569

National Conference on Bullying.—February 15-17, Orlando, [click here](#) for registration and other information.

National At-Risk Education Network National Conference - February 21-23, Panama City, [click here](#) for registration and information.

25th Annual Children's Mental Health Research and Policy Conference - March 4-7, Tampa, [click here](#) for registration and information.



Important Dates to Remember

January 2012

- Jan 10 - Legislative Session starts
- Jan 29 - Feb 3 - Children's Week
- Jan 30 - FJJA Board Meeting
DISC Village, Tallahassee
- Jan 31 - DJJ "Youth Success Day"
- Jan 31 - "FJJA Day at the Capital"
- Jan 31 - FJJA-FI Network Evening Reception

March 2012

- Mar 1, 2012 - FJJA Board Meeting
DISC Village, Tallahassee
- Mar 9 - Legislative Session ends

April 2012

- April 23-24, 2012 - Adolescent Conference, *Unsung Heroes: Making A Difference*, The Florida Hotel, Orlando,
- April 25, 2012 - Post Conference Workshop, The Florida Hotel, Orlando
- April 23, 2012 - FJJA Board Meeting and 1/2 Day Executive Committee Visioning Session, The Florida Hotel, Orlando

May/June 2012

- FJJA Annual Retreat, June 10-13, 2012

Upcoming Webinars

ARISE 60 Minute Webinars

Jan 25- *Making the Work Environment More Positive*

Feb 22- *Acting with Hope and Optimism*

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



Celebrating Youth Success!

Ashley's Story-PACE Center for Girls

I was born with my legs out of alignment and by the time I was eight years old I had completely blown out my knees. For almost ten years I was in and out of hospitals every other month, in a wheel chair, crutches, immobilizers and using a walker. Going to school was quite difficult because kids make fun of what they do not understand. Everyone has scars on the inside; I just happened to have them on the outside too.

I ultimately blamed my parents for my disabilities. The more I could not participate in everyday functions the more I rebelled. The torment I endured from peers led me to use my knees as an excuse to miss school. Eventually I just skipped every class I could to avoid humiliation.

By my second semester in high school I had skipped so many classes they recommended I attend Pace Center for Girls. From the first day I attended Pace I no longer felt like the black sheep. I finally felt like I belonged somewhere. I instantly created a bond with other girls and developed a new support system. I ended up making straight A's and excelled far beyond what I thought I would. I spent two years at Pace before returning to the regular school system.

Some of the most inspiring lessons I received were visiting a county jail, the "Baby Think It Over" curriculum and learning the reality of being a teenage mother, and weekly visits to the health department to learn about sexually transmitted diseases. When I turned 18, Shriners Hospital performed surgery on both my legs.

My favorite teacher at Pace taught me that no matter what happens I needed to stay in school and I did. Through three months of living in the hospital and over a year of physical therapy, I graduated with my BA in pre-law. I would not be where I am today if it was not for Pace.

I am now 28 years old and I would have just been another statistic. The guidance, support and direction I received from Pace has led me to where I am today. I have learned to forgive my family and not blame them. I appreciate life now and use the information provided to me to apply it to my real life. I am not perfect by any means, but without Pace, the word perfect would not even be in my vocabulary.

In Their Own Words

This month many of our youth talk about success in "their own words."

Brittany's Story- Okeechobee Girls Academy

My biggest success here at OGA is now I have a strong ability to work well with others and to succeed in my education. I have the opportunity to get help with my substance abuse issues and being here at O.G.A is really helping to guarantee me a better future.

Being here at O.G.A has really helped me to better cope with others. I have learned to be around others and accept their actions and words without having negative activity or behavior. Before I came here I would have handled situations differently and would have gotten into a disagreement and argument with others about every little situation.

I'm really succeeding at school, and getting good grades. Before I came here I was working on getting my GED and now I am getting better prepared for my GED test. By completing my lessons it is really refreshing my memory. I glad that I have the chance to improve my education here at O.G.A.

But most of all, I'm really succeeding in my non-use of abusive substances. Being here and attending groups have made me realize that life without drugs is really great. I now know that I can live my life drug free. I really thank O.G.A and the supportive staff for this opportunity. I think I've really accomplished a lot at O.G.A already, and when I go home, I will have better coping skills, a refreshed educational memory and a substance abuse free life. I feel this program has been a big help to me in getting my life straight for the future.



Celebrating Youth Success!

John's Story- Miami Bridge

When I lived at home it was an everyday conflict between my mother and me. Every day from dusk until dawn it was fighting. One day the cops got involved and decided it would be best if my mother and I were separated from each other.

The cops brought me to Miami Bridge and from the very beginning; the staff has helped me with many of my problems. Miami Bridge has given me a safe place where I have food, a shower, and shelter. At Miami Bridge, you can better yourself individually or along with other clients like those that I have. Being at Miami Bridge has been one of the best experiences of my life."

Jocelynn's Story - Okeechobee Girls Academy

When I arrived at OGA, I was upset and did not want to be here. I ignored staff, I did what I wanted to do, refused to follow directions, and most of all I didn't want to talk to anyone about my problems. I was only sentenced to 90 days at the program so I refused any help that was offered to me. After 1 1/2 months of being at the program, I started to participate in more activities. I slowly began to accept help. In group, I learned that talking about my problems is effective. Talking is better than holding it in, then exploding. Group helped me interact with my peers and staff more positively and respectfully. I was also able to start talking to certain people about my problems. Once I began to communicate with staff, I realized that I had support from them and that they were willing to help me, even if it was just being there to listen. Communicating, instead of shutting down, also helped me change my attitude and outlook on a lot of things. I'm not as angry as before and I'm working hard at not taking my anger out on those who are willing and trying to help me.

Using my coping skills helps me deal with certain situations in a more positive way. Standing back and taking a few deep breaths to calm down is now a part of my coping skills. Although walking away from negativity is still a struggle for me, I'm working hard at it day by day. I can honestly say that I have improved and I'm going to continue trying. Using my coping skills helps me "have a bad MOMENT, not a bad DAY." Once I complete my program, I plan to take what I've learned and use it in my everyday life and continue working hard at becoming a better person.

Moving Toward Success

Justin's Story- Daniel Memorial Community Based Intervention

Justin entered Daniel Memorial CBIS last summer after completing several months at the Desoto Juvenile Residential Facility. Justin's previous charges ranged from burglary, grand theft, marijuana possession, and petty theft. Justin had set a goal of living a better life, staying on track, but most importantly remaining drug free. His drug addiction had caused him conflict in his family, his dropping out of school, and losing sight of what life was really about.

True to his goal, Justin has done everything he planned. He has been totally compliant with all of his court ordered sanctions and in November, was awarded scholarship funds from the DJJ Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation, to help him pay for his GED exam and an identification card. He will take his GED exam in January,

Justin continues to pass all of his random drug screens, attends counseling, and meets with case manager weekly. Justin plans to remain crime free, drug free, and will be enrolling in college once he passes his GED exam.



Celebrating Youth Success!

Charles's Story-Crosswinds Brief Strategic Family Therapy

Charles was referred to the Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) Program at Crosswinds by his probation officer as a last resort to help him get back on track. Charles had a felony charge of possession of a weapon on school property. As a result of this arrest, he had been expelled from his regular high school and was attending an alternative school program. When he came to Crosswinds, his probation officer felt that his temper and attitude were hindering his ability to complete probation. Charles was failing in his alternative school program and seemed to have lost all of his motivation to improve his life.

In addition, there was a high level of conflict between Charles and his family. Frequent arguments included screaming, cursing and yelling at their home. Charles' parents were frustrated with their son because he would not open up to them and this frustration only led to more arguments. These problems were not only affecting Charles, but were also negatively impacting the entire family, including his younger brothers.

Through weekly home visits, the Crosswinds BSFT counselor worked to engage the whole family including parents, Charles, and his brothers. Charles and his parents slowly began to learn how to communicate differently with each other. As Charles' mother began to talk with Charles and his brothers without yelling or putting them down, the youth were then able to open up and talk more directly with their parents. Because of the improved support and connection with his parents and brothers, Charles began to become motivated to put his life back on track. He is now excelling in school and has obtained a part-time job. As a result, Charles successfully completed his probation requirements and has become a positive role model for his brothers.

Programs across the continuum of care provide youth with the tools to make better decisions, re-establish critical relationships, complete their education and obtain gainful employment.

FJJA is proud to honor these youth who have made a commitment to change, take responsibility for their actions and who have turned their lives around.

Haley's Story - Daniel Memorial Community Based Intervention

Haley entered Daniel Memorial CBIS Program in October after spending time at Lake Academy. Haley's charges ranged from shoplifting, petty theft, indecent exposure, and other law violations.

After her release from Lake Academy, Haley secured employment at AMF Bowling Lanes, scheduled her GED exam, and began counseling sessions. Haley has completed her GED exam in November and just started a new job.

With her success in conditional release, Haley and her mother requested early termination from the program, and Judge Jack Day agreed. Haley is off to a good start and plans to enroll at St. Petersburg College next fall.



Celebrating Youth Success!

Eboni's Story - PACE Center for Girls

Eboni is a bright, strong young woman who attends PACE and dreams of becoming a nurse. This is a far cry from a few years ago when her dream was to have a safe place to sleep and enjoy a hot meal. Born into a loving family, Eboni's father died when she was an infant. Her mother persevered and provided a good home until she was diagnosed with a terminal illness just as Eboni entered her teenage years. Eboni's life was turned upside down overnight, as she became her mother's caretaker.

As her mother's illness progressed, Eboni didn't know how to cope with the demands placed upon her and finally ran away to escape the pain and fear of losing her mother. With nowhere to go, she slept in cars and abandoned houses. Homeless and hungry, Eboni survived on her own although only 14. After long absences from school and an altercation with police, Eboni found herself in a juvenile detention center. While there, her mother passed away. Devastated by not being able to be with her mother at the end of her life, Eboni was at her lowest point. She finally realized she needed help to cope with the death of her parents and knew she needed to finish her education. Familiar with PACE, she wrote a letter requesting enrollment. While at PACE, Eboni's coping skills improved as have her grades. Her counselor has helped her overcome extremely challenging issues enabling her to build toward a solid future, something she never would have done living on the streets. Today, she lives with her grandparents who are very supportive of her determination to attend nursing school.

Vivian's Story - PACE Center for Girls

Vivian's grandmother was given custody of her when she was a newborn. When she was a young teenager, her grandmother passed away leaving Vivian to be placed in foster care until she aged out at 18. The life of moving from home to home led her to be involved with the juvenile justice system throughout her young life. Her first involvement occurred when she was only 12 years old and she and her brother had a domestic dispute. She was placed on probation. Shortly thereafter, at age 14, she violated her probation and was placed in the Florida Institute for Girls. Vivian spent over a year in the Institute for Girls. At 17, her life changed when she enrolled at PACE. She began to receive counseling and academic support and her grades began to improve. One year after her enrollment at PACE, Vivian transitioned from the day program and began receiving services through PACE Works!, a program that offers ongoing counseling and academic services to girls for three years after leaving PACE.

Today, Vivian is a graduate from Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) and is now attending the University of North Florida (UNF) where she is pursuing a degree in Sociology. Vivian plans to work with other youth that have been involved in the foster care system after she graduates from UNF. She wants to help children who face similar problems she had growing up. She is a Scheidel Scholarship recipient and lives on campus at UNF. She is currently employed at FSCJ and is also involved in the Collegiate Leadership of Jacksonville and Kids N Care. Vivian overcame extreme obstacles to get to where she is today. She believes she could not have made it without the help from PACE.



Celebrating Youth Success!

Linda's Story - Daniel Memorial/Home Builder's Institute

Linda has learned that mentoring makes a difference. When approached about HBI's mentoring program Construction Coaching Opportunities to Reach Employment (C-CORE) Linda (true name withheld for confidentiality) was unsure. She had been placed on probation with DJJ in Jacksonville for battery and possession of drug equipment. Her probation officer referred her to C-CORE Jacksonville, a partnership with HBI and Daniel Memorial. Linda wasn't sure we wanted a mentor, but she quickly learned the positive benefits of having a mentor. Linda and her mentor focused on her goals to complete her probation sanctions and address her family situation. With her mentors support and advocacy on her behalf, Linda has completed all her sanctions in a timely fashion. Linda stated, "I really appreciate my mentor helping me to find sites to complete community service hours and even volunteering with me."

Linda's mentor also assisted her in building independent living skills and moving into her own apartment. For now, Linda works full time at Quiznos and maintains a professional mindset. She has been able to get her own car and learn to budget with the support of her mentor. In the seven months since being matched with a mentor, Linda says, "My mentor and C-CORE staff are caring, more than my family. I really needed that during this time in my life. I always know I am not alone and my hard work is being noticed." Now eighteen, Linda has a plan for her future, including one day owning her own business.

Rachel's Story- PACE Center for Girls

Rachel's family life was never perfect, but when she was only 14, her father completely deserted her family. She did not know how to deal with her feelings of abandonment, so she stopped going to school and spent her days with friends. She then dropped out of school completely and started running away on a habitual basis. She would run away for days at a time, never letting anyone know where she was staying. Her mother was so frustrated that she eventually stopped looking for her after a while. One day when Rachel returned home only to have a terrible argument with her mother that resorted to violence. Rachel was arrested for domestic violence and was referred to PACE to prevent further involvement with the juvenile justice system.

While enrolled in the day program at the age of 15, Rachel worked with her counselor to learn how to deal with her increasingly challenging peer and family issues. She formed a deep bond with her counselor and truly listened to her advice. She received multiple awards and participated in several school activities such as the Convergys Job Shadowing Program. Rachel excelled in the day program and graduated in 2009. Her dream was to one day become a nurse. After graduation, she held a part-time job and continued to be involved in PACE Works! as well as the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) study group offered in our afternoon program as a part of the PACE transition services component. She received her CNA license in November 2010 and is now working in the field. She is also in school at Concord Career Institute working toward becoming a LPN.