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CONNECTING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CHILD WELFARE

Improving System Responses to Crossover Youth:

The Role of Research and Practice Partnerships

By Denise C. Herz, Miriam Krinsky, and Joseph P. Ryan

Although child abuse/neglect and juvenile delinquency were officially recognized as related social problems when the juvenile court was established in 1899, the court's ability to simultaneously respond to both problems remains tenuous. Youth who penetrate both the dependency and delinquency systems are traditionally handled by one or the other and eventually fall into the cracks between the two. The absence of coordinated responses for youth who cross into both systems is particularly concerning because many youth in the dependency system are at risk for delinquency, and many youth in the delinquency system are victims of abuse or neglect.

Restrictive laws, an absence of data, and system fragmentation hold substantial consequences for the overall success and well-being of crossover youth. Although limited, research on crossover youth, shows they are more likely to be detained, remain longer in the delinquency system, and recidivate at higher rates than are delinquent youth without a dependency history (Morris & Freundlich, 2004; Halemba & Lord, 2005; Ryan, in press; Wiig, Widom, & Tuell, 2004).

Thus, it is critical that juvenile courts build interagency coordination across court systems and service delivery agencies to reduce the number of crossover youth through prevention and appropriate levels and types of interventions. Using recent experiences in Los Angeles County the purpose of this article is to highlight how research and practice partnerships can help courts understand the crossover problem and improve system responses for crossover youth and all youth at risk in our dependency court system.

Overview of the Crossover Problem
 Nationwide, jurisdictions recognize the overlap in the dependency and delinquency populations but are unable to adequately address the issue for several reasons. Perhaps the most significant obstacle is state laws that prohibit dual jurisdiction over crossover youth. Specifically, California parts company with nearly every other state in the nation by statutorily compelling the termination of dependency jurisdiction and the closing of a

dependency case when a child moves into delinquency. Because this statutory framework results in the complete severance of dependency jurisdiction, many former dependent youth remain under the jurisdiction of the delinquency court longer than necessary. Unlike other children who complete their terms of probation and are sent home, these children are often "raised" under probation supervision, not due to any concerns associated with public safety, but rather due to the recognition that termination of probation jurisdiction will leave them without adequate care, housing, and supervision.

This practice can have far-reaching negative implications on the life of a child. The child's history of abuse, mental and emotional problems, and family difficulties remain, even when the youth moves from the child welfare to the delinquency system. Yet when a child crosses over into delinquency, she is less likely to receive desperately needed services and attention that could benefit both the youth and society.

A second obstacle to appropriately attending to the needs of youth who move from dependency to delinquency is the lack of data to document the number of and patterns of risk factors prevalent among crossover youth. Although juvenile courts readily admit that crossing over often occurs, jurisdictions rarely can produce information on how many crossover youth were processed, the characteristics of those youth, or the outcomes they received by the court.

The national, nonpartisan Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care recognized the critical importance of

see *Crossover*, page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Director's Message</i>	2
<i>Project Redirect</i>	6
<i>Public Policy Update</i>	9
<i>Juvenile Justice News and Resources</i> .	10

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is with a mixture of emotions that I announce my departure from CWLA. While I am excited about the new opportunities that lie ahead, I am sad to leave the League, the people who work here, and those I have come to know in the field. The past four years have been a busy and fulfilling time.

As I look back, I am amazed at how far we have come with the work of systems integration, especially as it relates to child welfare and juvenile justice. There is an increased awareness of how important it is to work together to improve outcomes for children and families. Fortunately, our accomplishments do not stop with information. Many jurisdictions are engaging in a strategic planning process to address the unique needs and strengths of dual jurisdiction youth. CWLA is playing a valuable role in the progress.

I want to thank John Tuell and Shay Bilchik for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this important work. I am proud to say I have worked for CWLA. Leaving the great staff is the hardest part of my departure. I especially appreciate the opportunity to work with the Juvenile Justice team: Dodd White and Kerrin Sweet. Working with upbeat, positive coworkers is what makes it so enjoyable. Thank you for your commitment, support, and dedication.

Our paths will cross again in the future.

Sincerely,



Christy Sharp
Director, Juvenile Justice

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from *Crossover*, page 1

tracking and managing data effectively in juvenile courts. Its report, *Fostering the Future: Strengthening Courts for Children in Foster Care* (2004), observed,

Many courts do not track and analyze their overall caseloads, making it difficult for them to spot emerging trends in the cases that come before them, eliminate the major causes of delays in court proceedings, and identify groups of children who may be entering or reentering foster care at very high rates, or staying in care the longest (p. 6).

A third problem is the fragmentation across systems, including within the juvenile dependency and delinquency systems. Crossover youth often encounter legal obstacles because of different court rules and cultures, but they also require coordinated attention from both social services and probation. Unfortunately, these two agencies have conflicting missions and philosophies (to protect verses to punish), different professional training (social work verses criminal justice), and different funding streams (Department of Health and Human Services verses State Probation Administration) that prevent coordination and collaboration.

Acting as communal parents for children in the juvenile court system, the nation fails to do right by the children we endeavor to help when agencies and institutions approach issues in this piecemeal fashion. Rather than the centralized oversight a parent brings every day to the needs, crises, and challenges unfolding in a child's life, disjointed governmental parenting of youth in the dependency and delinquency systems results in a lack of coordinated, thoughtful decision making. To address this issue, the Pew Commission (2004) recommended that "courts and agencies on the local and state levels should collaborate and jointly plan for the collection and sharing of all relevant aggregate data and information, which can lead to better decisions and outcomes for children" (p. 14).

These differences are amplified by a lack of information sharing due to confidentiality issues (for example, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and ultimately result in ineffective system responses and poor individual outcomes. Different components of the system that share responsibility for parts of a child's life too often have no effective mechanism for talking with each other

and sharing information. It is unimaginable to envision a parent barred from talking to his child's doctors, teachers, and others who are helping address the child's needs. Yet these precise information walls arise on a daily basis as social workers, judges, lawyers, and others seek to access critical information on behalf of children for whom they have responsibility.

The Role of Partnerships in Understanding the Problem

Historically, researchers and practitioners have not always been partners in understanding and addressing social problems, even though both share the desire to document and understand similar phenomena. Researchers often kept their distance from practitioners to protect the objectivity of their work, and the void between research and reality often discouraged practitioners from actively working with researchers.

As research evolved over the 20th Century, an interest and willingness to work together began to grow. Researchers recognized their work represented system realities more accurately when informed by practitioners, and practitioners found statistical results helpful in guiding and supporting system reform.

Research and practice collaborations hold significant promise for understanding the crossover problem. Whereas practitioners understand the crossover problem anecdotally, researchers can provide the methods necessary to document the scope of the problem and to identify specific risk and protective factors related to crossing over.

For example, research indicates that up to 29% of dependent children engage in delinquent behavior, and the risk of delinquency is approximately 47% higher for victims of child abuse and neglect. Moreover, dependent youth are arrested more often and begin offending at an earlier age, compared with nondependent youth (Widom, 1989; Zingraff, Leiter, Myers, & Johnsen, 1993; Kelley, Thornberry, & Smith, 1997; Stewart, Dennison, & Waterson, 2002; Widom & Maxfield, 1996; Ryan & Testa, 2005). These findings have played a critical role in assisting practitioner efforts to craft effective approaches and improve interagency cooperation.

Current activities in the Los Angeles County Juvenile Court illustrate how researchers and practitioners can actively and effectively work together to bring attention and clarity to the crossover problem and to enlighten system change and advocacy on behalf of children at risk.

As indicated earlier, California law prohibits dual jurisdiction of youth in both the dependency and delinquency system. Under California Welfare & Institutions Code §241, the juvenile courts must decide which system will handle the dependent youth who crosses into delinquency. The Los Angeles County Juvenile Court, under the leadership of Presiding Judge Michael Nash,

see *Crossover*, page 4

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from *Crossover*, page 3

developed a 241.1 protocol to guide this decision-making process, requiring that crossover youths receive a joint assessment by Probation and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The judge, in turn, used this information to determine whether the youth will remain a dependent ward or become a delinquency ward. Although the county has used this protocol for more than a decade, surprisingly little has been known about the number, characteristics, or dispositions of 241.1 youth.

In 2004, the Executive Director of the Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles (CLC)—counsel for the vast majority of the nearly 30,000 children and youth under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles dependency court system—presented the organization’s interest in and work to better attend to the needs of crossover youth at a California State University Los Angeles Juvenile Court Partnership meeting. Those remarks inspired interest among researchers in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics. Through a series of meetings, these researchers, in conjunction with researchers from the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, framed a research agenda for child advocates and researchers to pursue together in this area.

With the help and support of CLC, the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, Los Angeles County DCFS, and the Los Angeles County Department of Probation, researchers collected data from 241.1 assessment reports between April 1 and December 31, 2004. This study was the first of its kind in Los Angeles County, yielding 580 cases that provided information on crossover youth characteristics, the outcomes for crossover cases, and the relationship between youth/case characteristics and hearing outcomes. Descriptive statistics from this study reflect interesting trends and patterns in three key areas:

Youth and Case Characteristics

- The average time in DCFS for crossover youth was 7.38 years.
- Virtually all (98%) of these youth had been placed out of home at least once during this time. In fact, most crossover youth were living in out-of-home placements at the time of their arrest.
- Approximately one-third of the offenses were placement related, and these offenses most often occurred in group homes.
- At the time of arrest, 54% of the youth were detained at a juvenile detention hall.
- Most of these youth were not regularly attending school (24% not enrolled, 45% enrolled truant or irregular attendance); nor were they new to the problem behavior: 68% had previous contact with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

The 241.1 study also provided insight into the prevalence of mental health and substance abuse problems among

crossover youth. As shown in Table 1, only 17% of youth did not have a mental health or substance abuse problem. Approximately a quarter of the youth had mental health problems only, and one-third had both a mental health problem and substance abuse problem. In total, 83% had a mental health problem or a substance abuse problem. Although the assessment reports indicated that most youth (77%) received some type of mental health service, it was not clear that those services were appropriate for the youth’s level of need, or if they were well-attended. Conversely, the data indicated very few of these youth receive substance abuse treatment (only 8%), despite the fact that more than 50% needed some level of treatment.

Table 1: Prevalence of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems (N=580)

	n	%
Neither MH or SA Problem	97	17
Mental Health Problem Only	159	28
Substance Use/Abuse Only	99	17
Mental Health Problem and Substance Use/Abuse	220	38

241.1 Hearing Outcomes

Table 2 displays the distribution of dispositions for these cases. Nearly 30% received the harshest outcome—becoming a delinquent ward. Most youth remained dependency wards with informal probation (61%). If, however, they fail to comply with court orders, they can become a delinquency ward. Only a small percentage of cases were dismissed (10%).

Table 2: Summary of 241.1 Hearing Outcomes (N=577)

	n(%)
Dismissed	55 (10)
Remained a Dependency Ward w/Informal Probation	353 (61)
Became a Delinquency Ward	169 (29)

Youth/Case Characteristics and Hearing Outcomes

Finally, the 241.1 data allowed researchers to examine the relationship between youth and case characteristics and 241.1 hearing outcomes. Although these results are still preliminary, descriptive information indicates the following factors are related to becoming a delinquency ward:

- having poor school attendance,
- having a substance abuse problem,
- being detained at a juvenile detention facility following arrest,
- having prior offenses and/or a prior 241.1 hearing history, and

- having a larger number of risk factors (i.e., collectively being described as aggressive, a history of AWOL, poor participation in treatment, being generally uncontrollable).

The Role of Partnerships in Responding to the Problem

Results from the 241.1 study have played a critical role in refocusing discussions from a debate to cooperative forums to bring about change. In fact, these results became available at a key time for policy reform. In 2004 the California legislature enacted new law (Stats. 2004, ch. 468, § 1 [AB 129]) that for the first time enabled counties who opt in to pilot new approaches to address the needs of youth who cross from the dependency to the delinquency system.

AB 129 contained few constraints in regard to the dual supervision process a county can implement, other than directing that judges not issue conflicting orders and stating, “[i]n no case shall there be any simultaneous or duplicative case management or services provided by both the county probation department and the child welfare services department” (Section 241.1, subd. (e)(5)). These narrow limitations on experimentation provide an opening for counties to craft creative dual supervision procedures without running afoul of the statutory language. It is this ability to design and implement varying approaches and innovative pilot programs statewide that gives counties the ability under AB 129 to promote significant positive change in the lives of youth whose cases shift between the dependency and delinquency systems.

Beginning in 2005 the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, DCFS, and the Probation Department undertook an effort to develop a new 241.1 protocol. Based on AB 129, these three agencies expressed a willingness to work together in the protocol’s development. To facilitate this effort, the county contracted with the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) to help bring together key stakeholders from around the county and to help fully develop an appropriate protocol (Wiig & Tuell, 2004). Focusing on programs and services, legal barriers, and data collection, three subcommittees are working with an executive committee to develop a plan to effectively address the needs of youth crossing, or at risk of crossing, from the dependency to the delinquency system.

The data collected in the 241.1 study described above have been instrumental in informing and directing the key stakeholders involved in the AB 129 reform process. The results of this study both enlightened the stakeholders about the crossover population and confirmed their suspicions from their experience with this population.

To further incorporate research and data into the reform process, the researchers involved in this study, as well as other researchers active in child welfare reform in Los Angeles County, serve on the planning committees formed

by CWLA. In particular, researchers have a large role in the Data and Information Sharing Subcommittee to assist in the development of better data collection for this group of youth, to provide insight into how these data can be used to better understand the crossover population, and to evaluate any new programming and/or policies implemented as a result of AB 129 in Los Angeles County.

Although the planning effort is in its early stages, the partnership between research and practice has not only been productive, it also holds the potential to ensure the changes to improve responses to crossover youth are well-documented and ongoing.

Challenges to Building Researcher and Practitioner Partnerships

Los Angeles County’s experience demonstrates how research can significantly contribute to the momentum behind reforming system responses for crossover youth. Researcher-practitioner partnerships arguably create a synergy that increases the likelihood that advocacy, local and state practice and policy change, and legislative reform are well-documented and responsive to the needs of those they are intended to help.

No productive partnership is without its struggles and compromises, of course, particularly when it involves individuals from different points of reference who have different goals, pressures, and resources. Research is only as good as the data analyzed, and unfortunately, social service systems do not always maintain information systems that contain the best information to answer the most critical research questions. This challenge is amplified when working across two or more systems.

In the crossover study, for instance, finding youth in both information systems has been challenging because each agency identifies the youth differently and there is no common identifier. Thus, matches must be done manually (rather than automatically) using name, date of birth, and any other identifying information available. This process is typically time-consuming, costly, and frustrating to practitioners who want the results as soon as possible.

Once youth are found in information systems, researchers often encounter another problem—missing data on critical extralegal and contextual types of variables. For instance, placements in social service databases are typically reliable because documentation is required for payment, but school attendance and performance indicators are often missing or questionable in their accuracy because of inconsistent data entry. Such data issues have tremendous implications for the accuracy and applicability of results.

A lack of funding for this type of research is often another obstacle to building effective partnerships. Data collection and analysis takes time and resources, especially considering the challenges that researchers often encounter

Project Redirect: *Difficult Juveniles Get a New Outlook for the Future*

By Julie Yoder

Overview

Project Redirect (PRD) began as a community collaboration aiming to develop a service program that would address and resolve the longstanding, pervasive problems embedded in managing and serving multisystem and multiproblem youth. Through a relational approach with the community, PRD's efforts are focused on improving the social interactions between youth participants, their families, and the community.

The project design incorporates the use of multiple nontraditional activities to successfully engage adolescents and their families with the community. This is accomplished through volunteer mentors and partnering with community organizations for joint community service projects. Outstanding community organizations and businesses that are regular participants include Frontier District Boy Scouts of America, Bank of America, Bighorn 4x4 Club, and Colorado College. PRD's community partners contribute resources such as food donations, passes to Six Flags Elitch Gardens, scholarships for summer camps, creation of volunteer opportunities, and community volunteers.

Youth and their families become involved with PRD when one or more of the families' children are referred from the community as a result of involvement with gangs, the courts, or law enforcement. They can also be referred for problems at school, mental health concerns, drug or alcohol abuse, or long-term conflict with parents. While PRD focuses on youth ages of 9–18 it also assesses and provides services for the youths' family.

Background of Program Development

El Paso County, Colorado, comprises the communities of Calhan, Colorado Springs, Ellicott, Falcon, Fountain, Monument, Peyton, Rush, Security, and Widefield. El Paso County encompasses one of the highest concentrations of school-age children in the state. In 1994, 32% of all serious crime arrests by the Colorado Springs Police Department were youth ages 10–17, which represented only 12% of the total population of El Paso County. This problem became more apparent when the community noticed that 521 of the youth being served by El Paso County for delinquency were also involved with the Department of Human Services (DHS) residential care, and 411 of these same youth were being served by DHS Family Preservation Programs (Annual Report, 1994). Historically, these multisystem youth have been the most expensive to serve, with the least demonstrated effectiveness. Services for this group of youth were often

fragmented, duplicated, and not effective in response to an individual needs.

PRD was a result of a strategic planning process to address the problems of these multisystem, multiproblem youth in El Paso County. Officials conducted a comprehensive analysis of El Paso County youth in residential care and in placement alternative core programs. A review of what was working, what could be improved, and where the system was breaking down was included in the analysis discussions. The organizational/functional structure that would best facilitate progress and positive outcomes in a system for children and youth was identified. Funding was based on the historical spending patterns for our target population. The concept focused on modifying the existing service delivery system using the same monetary resources but building in efficiency, accountability, and consistent personalized contact. These efforts attempted to refocus the system of service management, delivery, and evaluation.

In February 1994, PRD began as a pilot program serving 100 multiproblem, multisystem youth. The PRD's goal was to serve multisystem youth more efficiently, more cost effectively, and with more accountability. El Paso County Department of Human Services was the lead agency, and the following partnering agencies came on board: Department of Health and Environment, Pikes Peak Mental Health Center, Goodwill Industries, School District Eight, and School District 11. Through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the partnerships documented and committed their resources, to this project. The result of this MOU was the blending of multiple agencies' resources, including dollars and staff, to provide collectively for clients. The funds for this partnership came from the reallocating existing funding. For example, both school districts reallocated enough money from their special education funding to pay for 2.5 full-time Caseworker III positions. This created a flexible, responsive resource to be used as individual case plans dictated.

The program was designed so each youth would have one primary case manager to coordinate, plan, and authorize all aspects of that youth's involvement with the system. At the same time, the team and member agencies would serve as technical resources in their respective areas of expertise (for example, substance abuse prevention, mental health, for employment and training) to all case managers.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

To keep up with the latest juvenile justice news, information, and policy developments, as well as the events, publications, and work being done by the CWLA Juvenile Justice Division, e-mail ksweet@cwla and sign up for jjpolnet, the CWLA Juvenile Justice Division Listserv.

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Philosophy and Program Goals

PRD interweaves a strong philosophy about youth and families around its program components. PRD's philosophy emphasizes:

- protecting children;
- preserving the unity of the family;
- giving families the ability to direct their own treatment;
- building genuine relationships with the family, which is key to successful service delivery;
- valuing experiential activities;
- collaborating and valuing partnering agencies and the community; and
- building bridges between the families and the community.

Combined with this philosophy, PRD has five major components to assist youth in making lasting positive life changes.

- **Consolidated team approach.** A consolidated team approach to case management ensures families receive teamwork. Families are assigned a primary caseworker but also get the benefit of additional support and back up through the use of three-member staff teams.
- **Experiential activities.** Experiential activities are conducted through the year and offer a stimulating component to PRD (Navalta, 1994). PRD offers, on average, 50 experiential activities annually. By providing new experiences for youth, PRD offers opportunities for success, personal challenges, promoting positive attitude changes, and fun. Positive activities at PRD provides opportunities for youth to develop and learn new skills and also expose them to wholesome, recreational activities.

Partnering with the local Boy Scouts of America (BSA) district office has opened the door to many new activities and adult and youth volunteers for PRD youth. In 2004, PRD and the BSA district office created a local Venturing group, a new opportunity for both boys and girls in PRD to complete one community service project monthly. Numerous hours of planning and direct contact with youth go into Venturing. Workers and youth participate together in the activities. Parents and siblings are involved whenever possible. BSA has also created is a summer camp for PRD youth.

Each year, PRD hosts two annual recognition ceremonies. These family and community events invite everyone to share in the accomplishments youth and families have obtained. Venturing and the recognition ceremonies have been funded

through grants and fundraising activities such as car washes, a Karaoke Jam, and selling Boy Scout popcorn. Both PRD staff and youth work together to raise this money.

Each year, PRD staff makes efforts to create new opportunities within the community for experiential activities. Experiential activities are also donated through partnering agencies and other community organizations and private donations.

- **Community Service.** PRD continuously makes a point to be involved with community initiatives. Community service activities such as the Cheyenne Mountain Cleanup, community trash pick up, trail maintenance, and Care and Share (Colorado Spring's largest food bank) all provide opportunities for PRD youth to interact positively and give something back to the community. With some community service projects, PRD partners with other organizations to accomplish the job. Youth receive creditable community service hours for the activities that they participate in. The enhanced relationships built through these community activities have allowed PRD to become more preventive in the program's approach to youth and their families.
- **Mentoring.** PRD team members recruit, train, and support community volunteers to offer a one-on-one mentoring program for PRD youth. Mentors invest a minimum of three hours per week, with a one-year commitment. PRD mentors must adhere to program philosophy and guidelines and must consent to a screening and interview process. Background checks are completed and paid for by the potential mentors. Through the mentoring program individuals in the community are invited to join with PRD to act as positive role models.
- **Outcomes.** PRD was developed with the belief that it would be accountable to the families it serves, the community, and its partners. For more than 10 years, PRD has been collecting outcomes. PRD was the first program in the El Paso County DHS to demonstrate the positive effects of an outcome-focused intervention. Youth are evaluated in the areas of safety, permanence, social/behavioral, and education for three months before their involvement with PRD. This creates the baseline from which we gauge their progress. Evaluations of each of the PRD youth are conducted quarterly. These are compiled into aggregate data annually.

Overall, PRD outcomes in the past 11 years indicate grade point averages have improved, police contacts have decreased, more youth are living at home, school attendance is up, and

see **Redirect**, page 8

from *Redirect*, page 7

disciplinary referrals are down. More specific outcomes can be found in the Accountability section of this article.

Population Served

The populations served through PRD are multisystem adolescent youth who have been involved with the human services system (Navalta, 1995). PRD youth are primarily in the Department of Human Services catchment area of “youth in conflict,” also known as Program Area Four. Identification of PRD youth includes reviewing the resources that the child and/or family has previously used. Ideally, youth who have exhausted types of services such as family preservation, multisystemic therapy (MST), or other interventions are good candidates for PRD. Delinquent youth who have more than two adjudications are most likely not strong candidates, although individual circumstances are considered.

From 1994 through 2004, youth were identified through two school district partnerships—Colorado Springs districts 8 and 11. Two and one half caseworkers were jointly hired and housed at the DHS. In 2004 PRD funding sources changed from the partnership to El Paso County Core dollars, and the result was PRD’s ability to serve the entire county.

Currently, referrals to the program can be generated via the community—for example, from school personnel, probation, local attorneys. Internal El Paso County DHS referrals occur from any of the ongoing or intake units, but are primarily from the other adolescent programs such as the Residential Treatment Center Team for youth transitioning back into the community and Team Success, a family preservation program.

The youth identified often are involved in gangs, with the courts, or with law enforcement, or have problems with drug and alcohol abuse. Other referring issues for PRD include mental health problems and long-term conflicts with parents, the school, and/or other authority figures. Once a referral is submitted a staffing is held. The staffing includes PRD staff, the family, the youth being referred, the person or organization who made the

referral, and anyone else the family identifies, such as neighbors, therapists, or extended family members.

Since 1994, PRD has served approximately 1,700 youth. On average, over the last four years, PRD has delivered services to 186 youth per year. The ethnicity of the youth served over the last three years is 66% white, 13% African American, 19% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. Over the last three years, youth have been referred to PRD for delinquency (56%), truancy (5%), as a condition of probation (33%), gang involvement (8%), drug and alcohol abuse (43%), mental health concerns (57%), and ongoing parent-child conflict (38%). Data for 2002–2004 indicates, on average, 39% of PRD youth are female, and 61% are male.

Staff Characteristics

Each youth involved with PRD has one primary caseworker who coordinates, plans, and authorizes all aspects of his or her involvement in the system. This person is responsible for all aspects of case management, including ensuring appropriate services are provided by other agencies. The caseworker partners with the family to develop the family services plan. At full capacity, PRD has 10 case managers, who carry a capped caseload of 10 cases each. In addition to the supervisor, the team includes a lead worker, and remaining team members are divided into triads, with each triad having a triad leader. This model provides the primary caseworker with the support and guidance necessary to provide intensive services and build strong relationships with the families.

Accountability

PRD’s outcome statistics are based on data collected for three months before a youth’s involvement with PRD. These statistics become the base from which measurements of progress and regress are gauged in subsequent quarters and throughout the life of each youth’s case. Data is collected quarterly and evaluated annually against aggregate goals. A vital product to this approach is accountability to consumers, the public, system critics, and community partners (Annual Report, 1994).

Program-related outcomes clearly demonstrate that PRD involvement positively affects overall school performance, reduction in delinquent behaviors, and permanence for youth. The following percentages are based on annual data, compared with the original baseline data, then calculated aggregately. Throughout the 11 years of the program, there has been an average 36% increase of grade point averages for PRD youth. Another indicator of positive school performance is an overall 12% increase in attendance during this same time period. The average school attendance rate for PRD youth is 80%. School suspensions have decreased an average of 48%. The expulsion rate has been cut by 52%.

A significant number of PRD youth are legally involved through their delinquent activities in diversion, probation, or Senate Bill 94, which provides state funding that

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PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

CWLA Joins in Cosponsoring Capitol Hill Briefings on Funding for Juvenile Justice

On May 17, CWLA participated in congressional briefings focused on urging Congress to reject deep cuts in federal funding for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition, of which CWLA is an active participant, coordinated the briefings. The briefings brought together young people and staff of local programs from around the country that receive this funding. They described their experiences with the initiatives and their effectiveness, and the importance of ensuring the drastic cuts in funding proposed for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention for FY 2007 are rejected.

The briefings focused on two specific initiatives administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Title V Local Community Prevention Grant program, and the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) program. Funding for Title V is proposed to be cut by half, from \$64.4 million to just \$32 million. The JABG funding is proposed to be eliminated entirely. Cuts of this magnitude would be devastating to community efforts to reduce youth crime and delinquency. Youth advocates and everyone concerned about youth are encouraged to contact their Senators and Representatives to urge them to reject these funding cuts.

covers screening, assessment, and services to preadjudicated as well adjudicated youth.

Consequently, we have set out to reduce the rate of youths' police contacts. During the past 10 years, PRD has demonstrated a 49% decrease in the number of police contacts.

PRD strives hard to maintain youth in their homes, and to increase the number of youth returned to their homes. Over the last five years, PRD has maintained an average rate of 86% of the youth residing in their homes. This data reflects an overall increase of youth living at home at the time of case closure. Data for 2002–2005 indicates that at case closure, an average 91% of PRD youth are at home, 75% have remained in school, and 5% have graduated from school.

Unfortunately, aggregate reporting tends to diminish outstanding individual achievements. To acknowledge individual achievements, PRD caseworkers recognize and applaud youths' accomplishments and struggles on a regular basis. Youth are also recognized at biannual PRD recognition ceremonies attended by family members, community members, judges, youth, guardians ad litem, and anyone the families or youth identify as important.

Beyond what graphs and numbers represent are the intangible accomplishments PRD celebrates. The influence of the relationships built cannot be measured. Compassion, dedication to innovation and creativity, common child and family-centered values, and committed teamwork are things that cannot be counted (Yoder, 2004).

References

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from *Crossover*, page 5

when using administrative data. Although practitioners are often willing to pay for research, they rarely have enough resources to adequately support the type of study they desire. Consequently, practitioners often must compromise on the type of study that is conducted while researchers must compromise on the cost of doing the research.

A final and significant challenge to building effective partnerships is finding a common language among researchers and practitioners. The technical writing of research is a potential barrier to using the results in a policy forum. Research results presented in this way potentially alienate practitioners and policymakers. Consequently, researchers must make an effort to translate technical writing into language that is straightforward and relevant to system realities. Again, researchers and practitioners committed to partnering can overcome this problem by sharing information and working together to develop the best forums in which to deliver the information.

Summary

Bridging the gap between research and practice is critical to improving our knowledge of what works, which in turn improves system efficiency and effectiveness. Building partnerships can be rewarding, but they require commitment, time, patience, and trust from all parties involved. When we wed practitioners and researchers we improve the quality of work in both disciplines. The Los Angeles County partnership experience underscores the importance of collaboration to understand problems and to improve the joint "parenting" of children in foster care.

see *Crossover*, page 12

JUVENILE JUSTICE NEWS AND RESOURCES

National Institute of Justice 2006 Annual Conference

Plan now to attend The NIJ Conference 2006, NIJ's annual conference on criminal justice research, development, and evaluation in the social and physical sciences.

On July 17–19, in Washington, DC, join 1,200 criminal justice researchers and practitioners for provocative panels and plenaries on an array of topics: What does the future of criminal justice look like? What went right—and wrong—for criminal justice in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita? How do we keep law enforcement and corrections officers safe? Are less lethal weapons safe and effective? How do we combat identity theft, and how do we help the victims of this 21st Century crime? How can we effectively respond to human trafficking victims? What are the latest findings from research on juvenile justice?

Conference details and online registration are available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/events/nij_conference2006.html.

G.R.E.A.T. Conference Promotes Gang Prevention

On July 26–28, 2006, in La Quinta, California, the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance will sponsor *G.R.E.A.T. & Beyond: Preventing Gangs & Youth Violence in America's Communities*. The conference will offer a range of workshops designed to address the needs of communities implementing the Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program, and those interested in doing so. As the conference registration fee has been waived, participants are only responsible for incidental expenses, such as travel, lodging, and meals. G.R.E.A.T. grant funds may be used for these other expenses.

To obtain further information about the 2006 G.R.E.A.T. Program conference, and to register online, visit the conference website at <http://conference.great-online.org>.

Juvenile and Family Court Judges to Hold Annual Conference in July

On July 16–19, 2006, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will hold its 69th annual conference.

Designed for judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, administrators, planners, social workers, psychologists, mental health professionals, CASA workers, and others who share their commitment to improving juvenile justice, the conference will include presentations on such timely topics as co-occurring disorders, detention reform, recidivism, and truancy prevention, among many others.

To obtain further information, including the conference brochure, and to register online, visit www.ncjfcj.org/content/view/645/315.

Children's Mental Health Conference Will Feature Systems of Care

On July 12–15, 2006, in Orlando, Florida, the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health of the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development will hold its 2006 Training Institutes. The conference will focus on local systems of care for children and adolescents with or at risk for emotional disturbances, and their families. The intent is to provide in-depth, practical information on how to develop, operate, and sustain comprehensive, coordinated, community-based systems of care and how to provide high-quality, effective clinical interventions and supports within such systems.

To obtain further information, and to register online, visit the center's website at http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/object_view.html?objectID=5709.

Conference Promotes Innovation in Preventing Underage Drinking

On August 24–26, 2006, in Baltimore, Maryland, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center will hold its annual National Leadership Conference, *Charting the Course: Promoting Innovation Through Action*. Plenary sessions and workshops will offer guidance for new and advanced practitioners on how to establish, maintain, and strengthen linkages between law enforcement and community agencies, including adult allies and youth, in an effort to prevent underage drinking and its consequences.

To obtain further information about the conference, and to register online, visit www.dgimeetings.com/nlc.

Conference to Explore Family Violence and Child Victimization

On July 9–11, 2006, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the Family Research Laboratory, and the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, will sponsor the International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference. Topics will include analyses from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being, trends and characteristics of youth Internet victimization, findings from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, and child homicide and fatal child maltreatment.

To obtain further information about the conference, and to register online, visit the conference website at www.unh.edu/frl/conferences/2006.

Juvenile Law Center's New Network of Websites

On April 3, the Juvenile Law Center (JLC) unveiled a new network of websites, www.jlc.org/index.php, including a redesigned version of the current JLC website. The network includes sites targeted toward professionals and adults in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, as well as a new youth-friendly site with fact sheets, resources, and tips for ensuring their rights are protected. With the launch, JLC is also introducing its Online Training Center, where professionals will be able to listen to recorded training sessions while viewing slides and related publications. The first online training session covers confidentiality and consent, with additional sessions soon to come.

Crime Prevention Council Launches Redesigned Website

The National Crime Prevention Council has launched a redesigned website that combines three previous websites into one site. The new website is the first product of the council's strategic plan, which focuses on four key areas in crime prevention:

- promoting crime prevention and personal safety;
- partnering with law enforcement, government, and organizations to prevent crime;
- protecting our children and youth; and
- responding to emerging crime trends.

Visit the National Crime Prevention Council's redesigned website at www.ncpc.org and "help take a bite out of crime."

CASA Report and Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine Discuss Underage Drinking

Underage drinkers and adult pathological drinkers (those that meet the clinical DSM-IV criteria for alcohol abuse or addiction) consume between 37.5% and 48.8% of all alcohol sold in the United States, according to an article in the May 1 issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

This groundbreaking study, "The Commercial Value of Underage Drinking and Adult Abusive and Dependent Drinking to the Alcohol Industry," conducted by researchers at The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, finds that underage drinkers and adult pathological drinkers account for at least \$48.3 billion and as much as \$62.9 billion in alcohol sales in 2001, the last year for which the necessary data were available.

CASA's related white paper, *The Commercial Value of Underage and Pathological Drinking to the Alcohol*

Industry, reveals that in 2001, at least \$22.5 billion of consumer spending on alcohol came from underage drinking, and \$25.8 billion came from adult pathological drinking.

Reports and articles are online, at www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/article.asp?articleid=287&zoneid=32.

Bulletin Examines Psychiatric Disorders of Youth in Detention

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has announced the availability of *Psychiatric Disorders of Youth in Detention*. Drawing on data from the Northwestern Juvenile Project, this 16-page bulletin examines the prevalence of alcohol, drug, and mental disorders among more than 1,800 youth at the Cook County (IL) Juvenile Temporary Detention Center.

Psychiatric Disorders of Youth in Detention (NCJ 210331) is available online at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=210331>.

Print copies can be ordered online at www.ncjrs.gov/app/publications/alphaList.aspx. Search by document number for quick access.

Highlights from Promising Practices

www.promisingpractices.net

Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Violent Media on Aggression in Children and Adults

—Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine

Television Viewing and Risk of Sexual Initiation by Young Adolescents

—Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine

What Are Kids Getting Into These Days? Demographic Differences in Youth Out-of-School Time Participation

—Harvard Family Research Project

Abstracts and more information are online at www.promisingpractices.net/newsletters/news0604.asp.

New WCCF Report, Rethinking the "Juvenile" in Juvenile Justice, Ties Brain Science to Policy

by Wendy Henderson

This article summarizes the Wisconsin Council on Children's recent report on the connection between adolescent brain development and juvenile justice, drawing a link between the neurological basis of adolescent impulsivity and sensible juvenile justice policy. Online at www.wccf.org/pdf/rethinkingjuv_jjsrpt/pdf.

Racial Disparities in Juvenile Justice: Disproportionate Minority Confinement in Wisconsin

by Aubrie Divine-Scott

Based on an interview with Hugh Griffith of Racine County Human Services, this article addresses the discrepancy between minorities as a proportion of the youth population and their representation in the justice system, and examines innovative approaches to this problem. Online at www.wccf.org.

Guide Helps Communities Respond to Juvenile Runaways

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has released *Juvenile Runaways*, an 86-page guide that describes the problem of juvenile runaways, reviews risk factors, and identifies questions designed to assist communities in analyzing their runaway problems. The guide also reviews responses to the problem from the perspectives of evaluative research and police practice.

from *Crossover*, page 9

Furthermore, it shows that all the obstacles related to building partnerships not only can be overcome but also can solidify relationships across disciplines.

Researcher and practitioner partnerships are not limited in utility to certain subject areas; rather, they have relevancy and importance for an array of issues facing the juvenile court today. Not only do these partnerships move us closer to reaching the ideals inherent in the juvenile court system, but such collaborative relationships also establish a model for working together within and across agencies directly and indirectly involved in helping children.

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Juvenile Runaways is available online at www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1694. You may also call COPS, toll free, at 800/421-6770.

Guide Lists Federal Resources for Youth Development

Published by America's Promise, a coalition of communities, organizations, businesses, and individuals supporting youth development programs, the *Guide to Federal Resources for Youth Development* provides information on federal funds available to support youth development programs. The guide lists more than 100 federal programs, including programs from the U.S. Department of Justice, which are cross-referenced to five core resources regarded as crucial to effective youth development.

The *Guide to Federal Resources for Youth Development* is available online at www.americaspromise.org/partners/federal_funding_guidelines.pdf.

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