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CLARK COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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1991

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**U.S. Department of Justice
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CLARK COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature authorized the use of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax money for improvements to the criminal justice system. The Clark County Board of Commissioners and Superior Court Judges felt that the best way to affect long-term criminal activity was to focus on juveniles. And specifically on those juveniles who enter the system as minor, or first offenders.

The three year funding of the Special Intervention Program by the Board of Commissioners is reflective of what may be the greatest single concern of the citizens of Clark County, the safety and protection of life and property, followed only by the ever increasing costs of the systems involved.

The Clark County Juvenile Department Special Intervention Program was developed in response to a proposal submitted by Carmel Bently, Director of Community Services, Jane Johnson, Director of

Corrections, and Gary Ripley, Administrator of Juvenile Court, to the 1991 Executive Budget Committee for Clark County. At the heart of this proposal was concern regarding the increasing incidence of serious crimes being committed by juveniles and the lack of any funding specifically dedicated to reducing recidivism. These key individuals proposed a program which would provide intensive intervention services to a select target group identified as at risk to reoffend. The project proposed two goals: to reduce the incidence of criminal activities by juveniles in the juvenile justice system and to reduce the adult criminal justice population through focus on juvenile offenders before they enter the adult system. In adopting this emphasis, the drafters proposed that the program should have a strong prevention component achieved through intensive case management, and coordinated and cooperative intervention between the juvenile justice, public education and social service systems.

INTRODUCTION

The statutory responsibility of the Juvenile Department is to serve the court and the community by providing a continuum of supervision and rehabilitation services which meet the needs of juvenile offenders in a manner consistent with the public interest. The record would show a long record of commitment to these responsibilities in Clark County. Reflected in this commitment has been an emphasis on community protection, offender accountability and rehabilitation. The record would also show, however, that fiscal and program emphasis has traditionally been on that segment of the offender population which was most visible, those older and most delinquent. A reduction in criminal activity as a result of this investment has not followed

on either a juvenile or adult corrections level. There is a considerable body of evidence which suggests that this may be a predictable outcome.

A recent study of offenders in the State of Massachusetts indicated that those youth who enter the system at a young age and stay in the system are substantially disadvantaged. That research showed that those offenders who first enter the juvenile justice system at age fourteen or younger and who continue to commit delinquent acts differ on most every Risk/Need Indicator from those who enter the system at a later age. These youth are more likely to recidivate, to be emotionally handicapped and to have unsupportive family and social relationships than youth who commit their first offense when older. The majority of these youth are educationally dysfunctional with a history of school related discipline problems.

The literature on childhood/adolescent development stresses that normal, healthy development requires consistent nurturing, continual positive feedback, and unambiguous structural support. These come from three sources: family, peers and school. Research indicates that juvenile offenders typically experience all three of these unhealthy situations which are often evident in even very young offenders on their first referral. Assessment of these and other factors can assist in identification of offenders who are likely to reoffend, the level of that risk, and specific problems requiring intervention.

The Special Intervention Program will target those youth who based on age and lack of serious criminal history, are identified by the law as minor/first offenders, but based on objective assessment are identified as at risk to reoffend. The program is

staffed by a manager, a supervisor, two probation counselors, six juvenile court associates and a clerk.

PROGRAM GOAL

The purpose of the program is to deter program participants from continued criminal activity by establishing effective community-based support systems that will serve youth after court ordered supervision expires.

The goal will be achieved by implementing the following objectives:

Each participant will have an individualized service plan based on his/her needs.

Individualized service plans will be developed in a collaborative manner with input from the offender and parent/caregiver, school staff, community agencies, health providers (when appropriate), and program staff.

Plans will ensure that participants will have access to a comprehensive array of services which address the youth's physical, emotional, social, and educational needs.

While participating in the program, youth will be encouraged to accept responsibility for their behavior and fulfill obligations related to court orders and diversion contracts.

Program participation will enhance the youth's chances for multiple service delivery in a coordinated manner. Program staff will have regular contact with all parties

participating in the development and/or delivery of service specified in the individualized service plan.

Staff will monitor the appropriateness of service delivery and assist in adjusting the plan as needed.

Just prior to exiting the program, each participant will have an appropriate and effective support system in place.

After participants exit the program, the staff will continue to monitor their progress by routinely reviewing department records.

CORE VALUES

The Special Intervention Program shall be youth centered, with the needs of the youth and family dictating the types and mix of services provided.

The Special Intervention Program shall be community based, with the locus of services as well as management and decision making responsibility resting at the community level.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SIP youth should have access to a comprehensive array of services that address the youth's physical, emotional, social and educational needs.

SIP youth should receive individualized services in accordance with the unique needs and potential of each youth, and guided by an individualized service plan.

The families and surrogate families of SIP youth should be full participants in all aspects of the planning and delivery of services.

SIP youth should receive services that are integrated with linkages between youth agencies and programs and mechanisms for planning, developing and coordinating services.

SIP youth should be provided with case management services which enhance the possibility for multiple service delivery in a coordinated manner and insure that they can move through the system of services in accordance with their changing needs.

Early identification and intervention for youth at risk to reoffend should be promoted by the Special Intervention Program in order to enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes.

SIP youth should be ensured smooth transition to other support and monitoring systems when their term of supervision has ended.

SIP youth should receive services without regard to race, religion, national origin, or sex, and services should be sensitive and responsive to cultural differences and special needs.

WHO MAY MAKE A REFERRAL?

Referrals will come from the Court, the Diversion Unit, and other Court Units within the Juvenile Department.

SIP REFERRAL CRITERIA

Youth who are referred to the Special Intervention Program shall meet the following criteria:

Be under the age of 17

Have status as a minor or first offender. Minor or first offender means a person sixteen years of age or younger whose current offense(s) and criminal history fall entirely within one of the following categories:

- (a) Four misdemeanors;
- (b) Two misdemeanors and one gross misdemeanor;
- (c) One misdemeanor and two gross misdemeanors;
- (d) Three gross misdemeanors;
- (e) One class C felony and one misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor;
- (f) One class B felony except: Any felony which constitutes an attempt to commit a class A felony; manslaughter in the first degree; rape in the second degree; assault in the second degree; extortion in the first degree; indecent liberties; kidnapping in the second degree; robbery in the second degree; burglary in the second degree; statutory rape in the second degree; vehicular homicide; or arson in the second degree.

Have status as a divertee. Minor or first offenders include a subgroup of offenders who have special status within the law. Where a case is legally sufficient the prosecutor shall divert the case if the alleged offense is a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor or violation and the alleged offense(s) in combination with the offender's criminal history do not exceed three offenses or violations and do not include any felonies.

Have status as truant under an Order of Court Intervention.

Be a middle offender under the age of fourteen whose criminal history includes no more than one felony offense.

Have maintained a reasonably stable residence with an adult care provider for eleven of twelve months prior to referral.

Present no evidence of serious psychiatric, behavioral, or emotional pathology for which residential treatment or other highly specialized intervention is required.

Express no suicidal ideation: attempt in the past three months; significant ideation within the past month.

Guardian willing to participate in service: minimum participation requires agreement to intervention plan and provision of required release(s) of information.

Youth and parent/guardian residents of Clark County.

Referral Procedure

The following set of guidelines are established for referrals:

Adjudicated minor or first offenders qualify for immediate screening. The Order of Community Supervision shall constitute sufficient initial screening information.

Youths who qualify for diversion must be referred to the program manager. The manager will review the case, and based on the referral information, staffing with the program supervisor and the level of diversion cases within the program unit, accept or return the referral. Although the department may monitor youth under terms of a diversion agreement, the authority and scope of action available to the probation counselor is more limited than that available under a court order. Therefore, no more than twenty percent of the maximum SIP caseload shall be youths under diversion contracts.

Priority will be given to those youth who through a screening process appear to be in the moderate to high risk to reoffend group. The SIP Candidate Form looks at these areas: criminal history of the youth; family history of criminality; family functioning; school; peers; mental health and substance abuse issues.

There is a high correlation between juvenile offense activity, truancy and other school related problems. The Special Intervention Program will serve a select group of at risk youth referred through Orders

of Court Intervention - truancy petitions. Although these youths will receive all program services, by statute the department has limited authority. Consequently, no more than 10% of the maximum SIP caseload shall be youths on Orders of Court Intervention.

The program supervisor will assign cases to a probation counselor for assessment, classification and case management functions.

The program supervisor will assign an associate to the case for monitoring and advocacy services.

Case Manager/Probation Counselor

Probation counselors will perform all required probation services and provide case management services to youth assigned to the Special Intervention Program.

Juvenile Services Associate

A juvenile services associate will be assigned to each youth in the Special Intervention Program. The primary role will be to support compliance with the court order and case plan. Assignment, whenever possible, will be geographical according to school district.

Files

Legal and social files shall be maintained pursuant to RCW 13.50.010 and RCW 13.50.050.

Evaluation

The Special Intervention Program will be evaluated by Marcia Haack, Ph.D. Dr. Haack will evaluate Communication, Program Organization and Management, Program Delivery, and Program Outcomes. The program evaluation will ask the following questions:

Communication

1. To what degree do parent/guardians, school staff, mental health professionals, social service and law enforcement agencies communicate with SIP staff regarding program participants?

Program Delivery

2. What kind of activities/objectives are specified in individualized plans? To what degree do children participate in these activities?
3. Do interested parties perceive participation in SIP related activities as worthwhile?

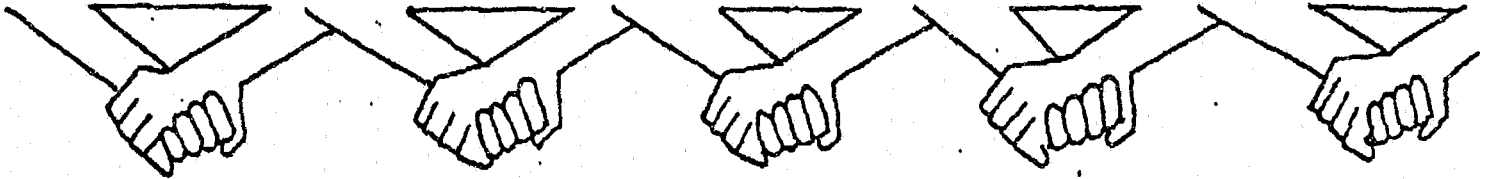
Program Outcomes

4. What range of variance is characteristic of students served within the program and how are they distributed across demographic dimensions?
5. Do participants re-offend after exiting the program?
6. Are activities specified in individualized plans effective in deterring future criminal activity?
7. Do interested parties, including children, perceive program participation as an effective means of deterring future criminal activity?

Program Organization and Management

8. Are there adequate time and resources for SIP staff to implement the program as intended? If no, what tasks/functions remain undone.

WINTER 1991



Working Together *by Gary Bevans*

Together we can and do achieve great things.

For this winter edition of our newsletter, the general theme is working together with a focus on efforts which combine personnel and monetary resources within Clark County.

We present examples of joint efforts involving mobilization against

substance abuse, energy assistance to low-income families, client skill development and juvenile issues.

Together private and non-profit companies, volunteers, state and local government and community involvement create action which improves our community.

As you read through this and future editions of *Bridges*, we hope

you say "I'd like to know more about that program", and consider getting involved.

We invite you, your family, your neighborhood and your employer or business to join us and all of our partners in working together to make a difference. ♦

Clark County's Special Intervention Program

The Best is Yet to Come *by Ernie Veach-White, Juvenile Services Manager Clark County Juvenile Court*

Research shows that children who commit crimes at a tender age and have family, school, social, drug or alcohol problems are at risk to grow into criminal lifestyles. The younger the child, the greater the risk unless something is done to change the situation. And the sooner the better.

The greatest barrier to doing something sooner has been lack of resources. Limited resources have required that Juvenile Court service dollars be spent on those kids who, due to serious or chronic delinquency, have demanded our attention. There has been little left for prevention or early intervention. Our situation in

Clark County has been no different than most other communities throughout the country.

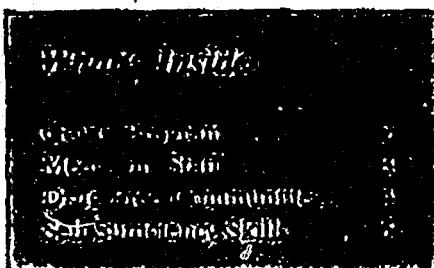
Last year, several of our elected officials saw an opportunity for change when the State Legislature authorized the use of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax money for improvements to the criminal justice system. Our Board of Commissioners and Superior Court Judges felt that the best way to affect long-term criminal activity was to focus on juveniles who are minor or first offenders. Out of this idea came the Special Intervention Program.

The Special Intervention Program (SIP) is a multi-disciplinary approach which involves Juvenile Court, the schools and social service agencies in working with minor first offenders and their families to provide the support and services needed to interrupt the youth's criminal activity. This program provides the best of what we have always provided for

juvenile offenders with new and creative approaches to intervention.

As in all Juvenile Court services, the minor first offender is assigned to a probation officer. However, in this program the juvenile and family also work directly with a Probation Associate. The Associates function as advocates and work in the community helping kids meet the conditions of their probation. This can include community service, anger management classes, and participation in a new Victim's Awareness Program. If necessary, basic things such as C-TRAN bus passes are provided so that kids without transportation can get to jobs, counseling appointments and school. The Associates see the kids assigned to their care at least once a week and more often as needed.

(continued on page 5)



Workshop Teaches Self-Sufficiency Skills *by Elaine Hertz*

Eleven families in the Battle Ground area are enjoying some easy, but tasty new recipes using government food commodities, their kids are wearing fancy new hair clips and bands made with material scraps, clothes have undergone updating and revitalization and the family finances are being budgeted. Not only that, but the family car is in better shape and there are fewer discipline problems between moms and their kids. That's what women who have participated in a program called "The Country Cupboard" are telling us. This program offers a series of classes to help low-income women learn new skills which will benefit them and their families by increasing their self-sufficiency and building their confidence and self-esteem.

Classes on auto maintenance, nutrition and cooking, sewing and mending, crafts, health and wellness, budgeting, safety and energy conservation are held weekly at the Battle Ground Methodist Church for eight weeks. Much of the learning is hands-on and everyone gets to enjoy the finished products of the meal preparation class and admire each others finished sewing and craft efforts.

All of this would not be possible if it weren't for the many people and organizations who work together to make these classes happen. Southwest Washington Health Department, Washington State Extension Service, Clark Public Utilities, the Food Bank Coalition,

several North County businesses and citizens have worked with the Department of Community Services to get this new program up and going.

If you or anyone you know is a Food Bank client, that's all it takes to be eligible to participate in the Country Cupboard. Also, donations of sewing notions and material are

badly needed. Please call (206) 687-7126 if you want more information, or have time, talents or materials you would like to donate.♦

Special Intervention: *continued from p. 1*

Every school in the county has Associates assigned to their district. The work of the associates in the schools is seen as critical. Associates meet regularly with school staff to coordinate activities. Dr. James Nelson, Jr., Associate Principal at Mt. View Junior High School, said recently, "I think the Special Intervention Program is a great program. When a youth in the program knows we (parents, school staff, Juvenile Court staff) are communicating they know they must be accountable for their behavior."

In addition to involvement with the schools, the Associates spend a lot of time working with families. Perhaps the following excerpt of a letter received from a parent speaks most eloquently of the importance of support for the family as well as the child:

"When the Special Intervention Program was first introduced to me, I'll be honest, I had my doubts...I believed in my heart that my daughter was destined to be a repeat offender. Possibly for more serious crimes. I was at the end of my parental rope. But my daughter's associate is an advocate in every sense of the word. She really does care. She is always there for my daughter and I have noticed a difference in the way my daughter feels about herself. My daughter's associate has helped her have more success than she has ever had before. She's helped us with problems with school and numerous other things. I have also found her to

be an advocate for me...She has offered me good advice and all the encouragement I could possibly need...The Special Intervention Program has great potential and great people working in it. I hope it continues. Keep up the good work!"

As much as we would like to see the permanent effects of this program immediately, we know that it's going to take time to see the long-term benefits. The early results are very promising. We are collecting information as we go and reporting our progress regularly to our legislators and Board of Commissioners. We are very aware that we are charting new ground.

We are also aware that the funding for this program is limited in duration. It is our goal that by the end of the funding period in 1993 this service will be integral to the operation of Juvenile Court with continued support from State Legislators.

Ultimately our community will benefit from this program in a number of ways - safer neighborhoods, inspired students and more productive and motivated youth. Clark County is investing in our greatest resource -- our youth.

The Juvenile Court has recently started publishing a newsletter called "Courting Success", which provides information on the Special Intervention Program and other Juvenile Court services. Please call 699-2201 to get on the mailing list.♦

BRIDGES is produced by the Dept. of Community Services Editorial Board: Gary Bayars, Glenda Dalton, Peggy Gullick, Scott Johnson and Tracy Sizer. You may contact the Editorial Board with any suggestions or changes to the mailing list at (206) 699-2201 or by writing to Clark County Department of Community Services, P.O. Box 5000, Vancouver, WA 98668.

County Program Focuses *First Of Its Kind In State* On Kids At Risk

An innovative program in the Clark County Juvenile Court system was launched in 1991 based on the premise that the price of prevention is worth many times the price of the cure. The need for the program was clear. Juvenile Court statistics show that nearly 50 percent of all offenders with a lengthy criminal history commit their first offense before the age of 14. In 1991, the Special Intervention Program began to single out these at-risk youngsters for special services in an effort to diminish the odds of failure.

"In the past, first offenders were not handled any differently from others," said program administrator Gary Ripley. "But we're becoming more preventative in our attack on behalf of the first offender who is at risk to re-offend." Six field associates provide the critical link with at-risk youth. "Our associates are not office-bound," Ripley added. "They are in the field dealing with kids in their homes, in community service programs, and in the schools in an effort to keep these kids in school. School is vital to their success."

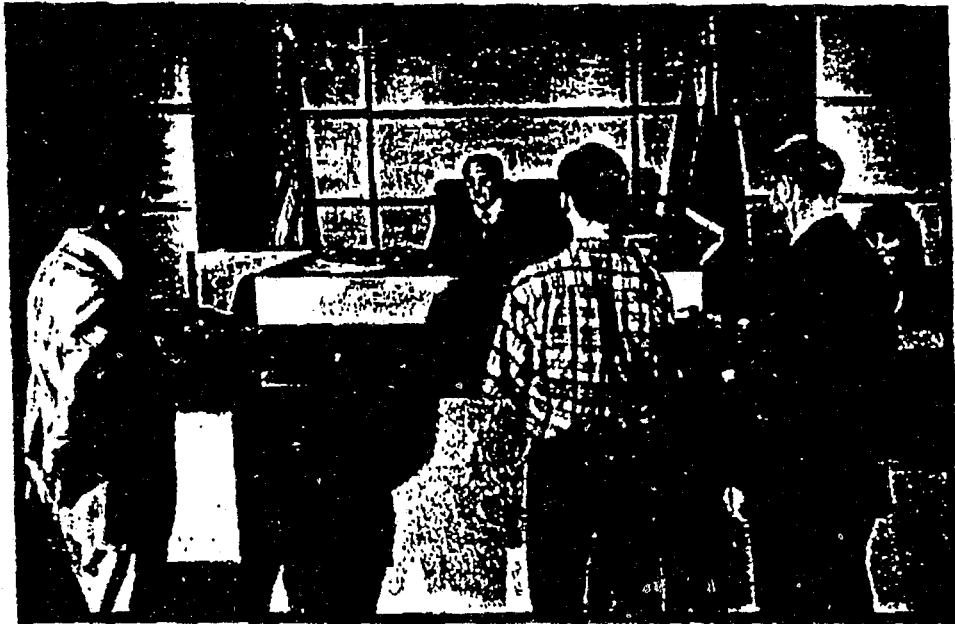
The six associates provide specialized services. Associates monitor student compliance with court orders, support participation in counseling, monitor school attendance and provide tutorial assistance. "We want kids to be involved in skills-building and anger control," Ripley said. "We want them to gain self-awareness. Before saying good-bye to an offender, we can show them some community links. We are

delivering a quality service, not just funneling them through the system."

Juvenile Court statistics support a new approach. In 1978, there were 278 youngsters under supervision and 900 diversion cases. The number under supervision has now grown to more than 500 with

ment to determine what is needed in intervention," Johnson said. "Do they need drug and alcohol counseling? What types of support do they need in their families and schools? We plan to make a holistic assessment."

Johnson added she hopes to see diminishing returns for



▲ In the courtroom of Judge Thomas Lodge, a first-time juvenile offender stands with attorneys for the prosecution and the defense and listens to the judge's decision. This recreation of an actual event was for a videotaping about the Special Intervention Program that was shown on CVTV-40, the City/County government channel.

Photography by Edward Vidlinghoff

1,400 in diversion programs. The average daily number of youths in detention in 1978 was 14, while today that number averages 31.

Jane Johnson, Clark County corrections director, said she is optimistic that early intervention will maximize use of community services available, and identify areas where resources are lacking. "We will use a multitude of tools for assess-

the adult corrections system. "We see double positive opportunities for this program. We hope to return good, motivated kids to society, and we hope to keep customers out of the adult system".

The Special Intervention Program is a component of the Clark County Youth Initiative. It began in the spring of 1990 as a coalition of Clark County

Continued On Page 21

By Pam Brinkley

"It Was A Dark And Stormy Night...But I Wasn't Worried. I Knew I Could Depend On All West!"



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CITY
Continued

ter, its flourishing Office of Neighborhoods programs, central coordination of the far-reaching Celebrate Freedom observance, and by providing for public access to the historically significant Marshall House and Grant House on Officers' Row.

During the rest of this decade, Vancouver will continue to flourish with the support of able elected officials, neighbors, groups and organizations, and a competent and dedicated city staff. Together we will continue to share an achievable vision, work collaboratively in the public interest, and provide the collective vision that makes Vancouver such a desirable place to live and work.

COUNTY
Continued from Page 11

school districts and other community resource groups, including corrections law enforcement, health, social, and education services.

Terry Nelson of the Vancouver School District serves as resource coordinator for the Youth Initiative. He said it was the dropout rate, followed by the inability of school districts to provide useful deterrents to youngsters who had already had a brush with the law, that pointed out the necessity of coming up with a different approach for at-risk youth.

"What all too often happened for first offenders, was that we ended up apprehending those kids again in violations at school," Nelson said. "As a school system, we had no resources to intervene. We were not able to get services to kids to prevent recidivism."

Nelson said the Youth

Initiative provided a means of assembling a network of key people who could work together to deliver the services at-risk youth need. "All of us represent large agencies and we're trying to bring our resources into concert to meet these objectives," Nelson said. "For better or worse, our agencies have had a narrow focus. We are now broadening our perspectives."

Nelson said the students who are most at risk face multiple challenges. "They are coming from families that are unfortunately deficit," Nelson said. "Somebody's got to take care of the basic needs before we can educate them. We had to talk about more than the dropout rate. We had to back up to get the big picture. Now we have to put in place a final safety net."

Funding is provided by the

Criminal Justice Assistance Act, a three-year program which apportions motor vehicle excise tax for county use. The Clark County Board of Commissioners elected to fund the effort—the first of its kind in the state of Washington—and included \$410,000 for the program in its 1991 budget for the first year.

"In the past, the bulk of the money has gone to kids most visible in the community—the repeat offenders," said program manager Ernie Veach-White. "We now have a chance to divert them from going on to chronic-offender life-styles as adults. Many kids benefit from what our department does, but they can benefit from our being able to offer more."