



Juvenile Justice Journal

Published by the Kentucky
Department of Juvenile Justice

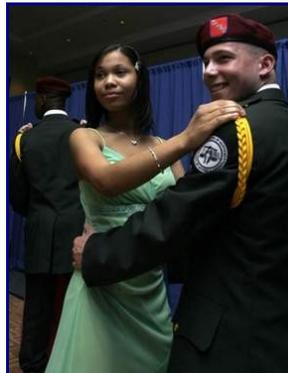
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Stacy H. Floden
James W. Thompson

Going to the Prom



Two YDC youths enjoy a dance.

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Staci Dotson looks quizzical as Keri Caesar twists up a tube of lipstick.

In the absence of blush, Caesar is trying to convince the 15-year-old that lipstick will do the trick. Staci isn't so certain, but she lets Caesar try anyway.

Across the hall, Joniesha Jackson titters as powder is applied to her face, and Sandra Pie exclaims that her lip gloss isn't "popping."

Neither she nor Joniesha, both 15, has ever been to a dance.

But tonight they are going to the prom.

Boys are the big worry.

"I feel like I'm gonna dance on their toes," says Sandra.

"I feel like they're gonna step on my toes," says Joniesha.

Staci is silent. She has been to dances before, but not recently. She hasn't applied makeup in almost a year and can't remember the last time she wore a dress. She has been at Morehead Youth Development Center,

where girls are sent for everything from truancy to murder, for six months. Joniesha has been here more than eight months and Sandra for about four months. They all say they are here for assault, among other things.

Boys and satin dresses are an uncommon occurrence at the Morehead center. Khakis and regulations are the norm.

"You know, to us, it's no big deal. We are used to doing dances and things of that nature," says superintendent Kris Mann. "But for these kids, a lot of whom won't have the opportunity to graduate from high school and be involved at the high school

prom, this is a big event for them."

There are other dances during the year, he says, but the prom with the boys' Cadet Leadership & Education Alternative Program in Jackson, Ky., a juvenile justice department boot camp facility that combines a military regimen with therapeutic services, is the big one.

Girls must earn the right to attend, and this year only 10 of the center's 30 plus residents are going.

They chose their donated dresses weeks ago, cut their hair the weekend before and painted their nails the night before. In addition to being a great motivator, says Mann, the prom gets the girls -- many of whom have only had relationships with older men -- used to interacting with boys their own age.

Back in the "cottage" where the girls live, Joniesha debates how she is going to fix her hair. Caesar, a Morehead State University social work student who is helping out, has moved on to Staci's short wavy

Worker of the Month Spotlight

In residential facilities for youth, one essential element for a good functioning program that meets the needs of residents is to have staff members who have relationship building skills and communications talents that lead to almost any youth from almost any background to feel that the staff care for and respect them in a basic way.

At Green River YDC the leader in those skills is YW Supervisor Rick Coots. If one were to take a poll of residents at GRYDC, with the category of “what staff have helped you here” there is no doubt that Mr. Coots would be at or near the top of the lists. One current resident states, “Mr. Coots was talking to me a lot when I was new and I didn’t want to make it here. He let me know that I had someone who would be there for me on staff.” Another resident stated, “I know I will call and let Mr. Coots know how I am doing when I go home. He helped me the most.”

This March, when the ACA audit was taking place, the auditors heard a lot of these same things from residents about Mr. Coots. They said that the residents were positive about staff in general, but that Rick Coots and his brother Ron, who also is a supervisor, led the way. The lead auditor asked to meet them, and told the superintendent that staff like them “sell the program to the residents”, who in turn, “sold it to the auditors”.

Rick Coots went to work here in 1991. He was born and

raised in Gary Indiana, where his father was a steel mill worker. Mr. Coots also worked in steel mills some, but the Gary mills began to close and he left to do several things in a number of places, such as Alaska, Texas and Wisconsin before settling here, where both his parents grew up, and where he visited often as a child. He now resides in Hartford KY with his wife and four children.

Mr. Coots says he appreciates the praise and credit he is given these days from sources such as supervisors and the ACA team, but he says he is most proud of the positive feedback from residents. He states he was always a communicative and emotional person who would not hesitate to express opinions and feelings.

These are tools and talents that can translate well in this business, but he says like anyone else, he had to learn how to use them correctly in this environment and to focus and motivate himself to be dedicated to the job. “I was not always convinced I would stay here as a career”, he said.

“I always got along well with residents, but I was not always consistent and sometimes I did not do my best because I was thinking about changing jobs, and wasn’t fully committed here.”

Once he decided he was here to stay, Mr. Coots began to realize he needed to learn more about how to work effectively with youth. “I may have been a natural communicator, but I had to

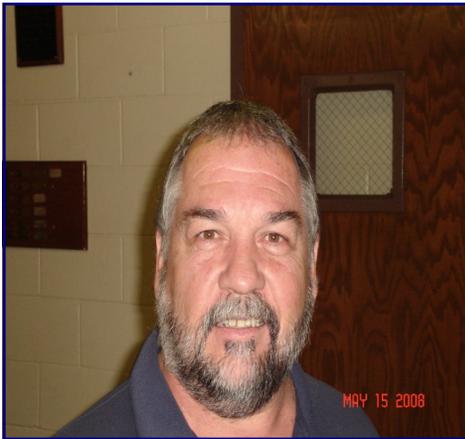
learn how to do it right. I listened to what my supervisors and coworkers said, and I listened to residents about how they felt about me”. I went to trainings beyond the requirements also.”

Mr. Coots graduated the YWCP program at ECU. He also took group counseling certification, and other counseling training. All the training and experience guide his skills of what to say, how to say it and when to say it when working with youth. He has developed a high level of effective communications skills.

Mr. Coots says, “I believe that we are here for the residents and when we are putting our input in as best we can, and honest, that we can’t go very wrong. Even if it doesn’t hit the mark, trying your best is important”. “The kids are going to know when you are for real, they will give you credit, and they will appreciate it.” They will accept your leadership and discipline and criticism when they see you as a real and caring person”.

“The things I have learned and benefitted from, I try to pay it forward for the residents and for the staff coming behind me” says Coots. There are many good things happening at GRYDC and they happen due to quality efforts from many people working here. There are none any better at this time than Mr. Rick Coots.

(contributed by Richard Barnes)



Rick Coots

Support Person of the Month Spotlight

Mathematics is perhaps the most detested school subject of them all. However, if you were to take a poll of the residents of Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center (FRJDC), you would find that under that roof, the opinion varies a great deal from the norm. All the credit for this seemingly otherworldly love for numbers goes entirely to Mr. Scott Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson is more than qualified to teach at any traditional school in the state of Kentucky, but chooses to work with the student population of FRJDC. He is highly committed to the education of this at risk student population. On weekends and holidays it is no surprise to see Mr. Ferguson in his classroom with a group of students or in one of FRJDC's housing units providing extra individual tutoring to a resident who has expressed an interest in moving forward with their academic career.

Mr. Ferguson brings an excitement to a classroom that is rarely seen in any school setting, let alone an alternative school. The students at FRJDC are rarely on grade level and often times have little or no knowledge of basic math skills. Mr. Ferguson has shown that he can take these students beyond these basics; often time exposing them not just to addition, subtraction,

multiplication, and division, but further on to geometry, calculus, and trigonometry. This is a very exciting stride for most of these students; it gives them an opportunity for success that they have never experienced before. Mr. Ferguson has very high expectations of his students and is a tough taskmaster. He always hands out homework, even on holidays and weekends, and fully expects all students to complete this homework to the best of their ability. The students willingly complete this extra work; they do not want to disappoint Mr. Ferguson.

When asked why Mr. Ferguson is their favorite teacher several residents had the following things to say:

“He takes the time to help us out.” (Demetrius)

“He is TOUGH but FAIR!” (G a r y)

“He helped me set some academic goals and pushed me towards those goals.” (Tony)

“He is working to help me get my transcripts from other schools so that I get credit for all the work I have done.” (Jose)

“He helped me achieve my high school diploma.” (Aaron)

“He is helping me get my GED.” (David)

A FRJDC youth worker was quoted as saying, “Mr. Ferguson takes it personal if a student in his class is not learning.” He does not view this lack of learning or understanding as the fault of the student but as some misgiving of his own and he works diligently to correct the problem. In addition to his duties as primary mathematics educator at FRJDC, Mr. Ferguson also teaches Character Education classes, which leads to student success beyond their time spent in the facility; as well as serving as Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach at Bryan Station High School.

At the age of twenty, Mr. Ferguson enlisted in the United States Army. For the next 22 years he served his country rising to and retiring at the rank of First Sergeant (P).

(continued on page 7)

Upcoming Spotlights

June

Facility-WCS3
Worker-Burnside GH
Support-Campbell RJDC
CO-Stacy Floden

July

Facility-ECS1
Worker-Westport GH
Support-Mayfield GH
CO-La Donna Koebel

Did You Know?

The President's Council on physical fitness has just released its new standards for adults. Take the challenge to see how you compare!

<http://www.adultfitnessstest.org/adultFitnessstestLanding.aspx>

Recently, the Fayette County RJDC received an outstanding rating from the American Correctional Association (ACA) with a 100% rating for all 29 mandatory standards and a 98.4% score in the non-mandatory standards. One of the reviewers commented that “if I lived in Lexington, KY and my son ended up in FRJDC, I would absolutely feel confident that my son would be taken care of and he would be treated well.”

(Courtesy: KECSAC The Collaborative, Volume XV, Issue II)

Facility Spotlight

For more information on topics presented in this publication, contact James Thompson of DJJ at 502/573-2738 or JamesW.Thompson@ky.gov

The Northern KY Day Treatment Center (NKDT) is located in Covington, KY at 19 East Pike Street. The Center had its humble beginnings 30 years ago in Newport, Kentucky. Originally known as the Newport Day Treatment Program (NDT), it operated in collaboration with the Newport Independent School District which provided the educational staffing. The service area was limited to the northern Campbell County Ohio River cities. The NDT program was a traditional day treatment model with a capacity of 45 youth providing treatment services to approximately 90 youth and their families

annually. At the beginning of the 2002 school year, Newport Schools decided to end their collaborative effort with NDT. In September 2002, NDT moved to its current location in Covington. The name was changed to NKDT to accurately reflect our new service area.

NKDT is a non-traditional day treatment model (i.e. there are no youth on-site) that works with committed and probated DJJ youth in alternative, G.E.D., vocational, and traditional school settings; on job sites; in the home or office setting individually and with their families; and monitors other community activities such as court-ordered community service. Treatment strategies are solution-focused directed toward promoting youth behavior reform and stabilization within families and in youth interactive community settings. A holistic approach by staff renders an opportunity to provide treatment services beyond the traditional school model.

There are three 2-person treatment teams consisting of one counselor and youth worker. Each team provides treatment services for ten youth. Youth and their families

are engaged through phone calls, office visits, school visits, job site visits, home visits, group activities, structured recreation, and community service opportunities. Collateral treatment contacts are made as indicated in the youth's service plan. Youth engagements are documented by a daily progress/behavior report emailed to the Juvenile Service Worker.

All referrals are made by the DJJ Community N-1 Juvenile Service Worker Supervisor. Program services are available to eligible youth in Campbell and Kenton Counties. Limited service is available to eligible youth in northern Boone County. The program model offers the flexibility to monitor short term referrals for as little as 30 days or address the longer term needs of youth for six months or longer.

The dedicated and passionate staffs of NKDT and Community N-1 are the catalyst for the success of the program. Their effort to establish a strong treatment service network, combined with the collaboration with the 14 local independent school systems, will continue to enhance the quality of life for the youth we serve for many years.



Your hard-working editor is caught installing a coffee cup rack in the Central Office break room. The residents at Lincoln Village YDC did an excellent job of creating the beautiful hand-made racks.

Going to the Prom (cont.)

hair, and youth worker Katie Thompson is finishing off Sandra's.

Outfitted in a fitted floor-length black dress with a slit up the side, Sandra looks nothing like the girl that was worried about a pimple on her nose that morning.

Joniesha is less sure of herself, fretting over her "nappy" hair and "fat" toes. At barely more than 5 feet tall and 100 pounds, Joniesha is tiny and looks like a fairy in her flowing green dress. But she complains that she is perspiring and her hair won't do anything without gel, which she doesn't have.

Putting down the brush and flat iron, she crinkles her face.

"I don't want to get ready for no prom," she says.

At the center's other cottage, Jennifer Stainback sees things differently.

Just shy of 18, Jennifer figured she would be sitting out the prom when she was sent to the Morehead facility. Now she can't wait to hear the music and dance. Dressed in a form-fitting, sparkly blue gown, she waits by the door with the other girls in their shimmering pinks and greens, until a staff member declares: "We're not leaving this cottage until you girls have something on your arms." The girls head to the front room closet and cover their bare shoulders and soft skin with their rough, brown, regulation jackets.

A rare sight

As soon as they arrive at the Morehead Conference Center, where the prom is being held, the girls shed their jackets. Tonight they are allowed to talk with each other without asking permission, and they giggle and chat as they search for their name tags and take their seats.

The girls sit at three round tables, the seats directly beside them reserved for the boys. In front of them is a decorative arch hung with straw hats and leis, behind them a dance floor. The theme of the prom is Luau.

It takes Brandy Harmon, the center's recreation leader, at least two months to get it all set up. The music is the hardest part.

"They (the girls) gave me six pages of songs they wanted. Out of those there was maybe a page that was appropriate, or I could find an edited version for," she says.

Inappropriate sexual content and gang references rule out many of the songs, Mann explained earlier. Staff members have to approve every song that is played, so a lot of '80s hits get chosen, says Mann -- songs from before these kids were born. Some modern pop and R&B tunes also make the cut.

As the boys enter, Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" is playing softly in the background. In their military dress greens, white gloves and black boots, the boys search for their name tags.

Cadet Elliott Brockman finds his seat next to Jennifer. His boots were shined, he says, "but somebody's already stepped on them, so they're ruined."

At another table, Cadet Donovan Rowland speaks nervously. According to his counselor, Brandon Alsept, Donovan has been nervous for several days. At the cadet program, says Donovan, "We hardly ever see females." Now he is seated with four of them.

"Who is shaking the table?" asks Candice Mackie, 16. Joniesha raises her hand.

Mann interrupts to call the teens up to the arch for photos, one couple at a time. The girls stand with their hands clutching the sides of their dresses, the boys with their hands clasped in front of them. None of the couples stand close enough to touch each other.

Joniesha barely makes it into the photo with the boy who stands next to her. As he

edges closer, she edges farther away.

After photos, the teens serve themselves dinner from a catered buffet, and then the dancing begins. Or, at least, the music becomes louder, and the boys and girls stand together in clumps on the dance floor. The boys, says Alsept, have been prepared to ask the girls to dance. But they seem to need some prodding, which Alsept and his colleagues gladly provide.

Buster Noel isn't having any of it. The 15-year old from Lexington says he only knows how to dance to country music.

"I'll wait for everyone else to dance so I won't be seen and blend in," he says.

A few minutes later he moves toward Staci. Before the next song is over, his clunky black boots are shuffling next to her bare feet.



Having fun at the YMCA.....

Going to the Prom (cont.)

Making a move

Joniesha remains on the sidelines.

When a boy moves toward her, she keeps him at a distance, stepping back when he tries to touch her. While most of the other girls have taken off their shoes and rest their hands on the boys' shoulders, Joniesha remains several feet away from her partner, her hands at her side, and her clear Cinderella slippers firmly on her feet.

Mann had explained earlier that many of the girls have been abused, some of them sexually: "So they have a hard time trusting males in general."

The Village People's 1978 hit "YMCA" loosens everyone up. The Electric Slide and Cha Cha Slide get the girls helping the boys, who watch them intently, but still manage to turn the wrong way at the wrong time.

Tomorrow morning, the boys will be up at 5:30

and spend the day cleaning the barracks. The girls will get up at 6 and also spend the day cleaning. Vanity time will be limited to five minutes. The dresses will be packed away for next year, the makeup put away and talking will be allowed only with permission.

But right now, they joke about dance moves, teasing each other as they demonstrate their own versions. Then the R&B ballad "Weak" by SWV comes on.

Boys and girls pair off, and Donovan looks at Joniesha.

"Are you serious?" says Joniesha.

I don't know what it is that you've done to me ... but it's caused me to act in such a crazy way.

Donovan moves closer. Joniesha doesn't move away.

Whatever it is that you do when you do what you're doing ... it's a feeling that I want to stay.

Donovan puts his hands on her waist and begins to move.

Joniesha starts to follow. "I don't know where I'm

supposed to put my hands," she says.

Staci comes over to help. Joniesha places her hands on Donovan's shoulders. She keeps her eyes on his feet.

"I'm going too fast," she says. "Don't step on my toes."

I get so weak in the knees I can hardly speak. I lose all control and something takes over me. In a daze and it's so amazing, it's not a phase. I want you to stay with me, by my side.

When the song ends, they move away. But when the last dance is called, Frank Sinatra's "My Way," Joniesha is reluctant to sit it out.

Donovan, who has been crowned prince, is dancing with Staci, who has been crowned princess.

Joniesha slides up next to them.

"When you're done, can I dance with him?" she asks her.

And Staci steps away.

Courtesy: Katya Cengel
2008 Courier-Journal

Congratulations to the Department's 61st Training Academy Graduates!

Timothy Alonzo
Ceresa Angel
Melody Arnold
Brittany Brewington
Christopher Callan
Darren Carty
Harold Chase
Devralyn Dunham
Richard Fleckinstein
James Fultz
Eric Gifford
Eric Gore
Gary Haines
James Harris
Cara Hendricks
Donna Jackson
Richard Kent, Jr.
Kenneth Marcum
Deona McDonald
Robbie Phelps
Tim Prather
George Richards
Randall Richardson, Jr.
Lisa Rivers
Tanya Rowland
Justin Royal
Samantha Sons
Mark Thompson
Jeremy Tyler
Victoria Whitelaw

Burnside GH Recognized for Performance



Burnside Group Home was honored for outstanding performance in Comprehensive Monitoring for three years. They scored 100 on mandatory and non mandatory items. This is an outstanding achievement.

Burnside GH staff and youth watch as Superintendent Tim Conn accepts a plaque from Deputy Commissioner Ellerkamp.

Support Person of the Month Spotlight *(Cont'd)*

(Continued from page 3)

During his military service Mr. Ferguson began pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Sociology and Political Science, which he completed at Eastern Kentucky University upon retirement. Mr. Ferguson furthered his education at EKU by completing a Masters Degree in Public Administration and Special Education and achieving his Rank I with a specialty in Behavior Disorders. Mr. Ferguson will be pursuing a Doctorate degree in Education in the fall of this year.

In addition to volunteer time spent at FRJDC, Mr. Ferguson gives even more to his community by sponsoring a group for youth under 21 that teaches social and moral values called the Knights of Pythagoras. He provides free tutoring in the community as well as a 6- week summer academy at a local public library for youth that need the extra help. He is a member of Phi Sigma Alpha and Alpha Kappa Psi Honor Societies as well as Phi Beta Sigma and the Free Masons.

Mr. Ferguson's work is very much appreciated by all the staff at FRJDC. His positive attitude and uncanny ability to determine what each individual student needs to be successful helps further the overall mission of FRJDC. Mr. Ferguson states, "I don't want to teach anywhere else. I love my job at Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center. I am happy and proud to be a member of this team."

(contributed by Alichia Stanley)

Bluegrass YDC started having technical classes at Bluegrass Community College in 2007. Prior to this, Bluegrass YDC did not have a technical offering for the youth nor a building to have technical classes. With the assistance from the DJJ QA Branch, youth at Bluegrass are now receiving basic carpentry skills to assist them in finding a job. These classes will transfer to other colleges across the state.



Mr. Scott Ferguson

The Mayfield Youth Development Center is pleased to announce that their very own "GS" has been awarded a Construction Scholarship. The scholarship is given through the Kentucky Association of Career and Technical Education- Special Needs Personnel Division. It is worth \$500.00 (\$250.00 each semester). GS will use this scholarship at the Bluegrass Community and Technical College, where he plans to pursue an education in the construction field. We are all very proud of GS's accomplishments and wish him the very best. Kudos to him!!!



Joe Payne,
Placement Services Director

Central Office Employee Spotlight

Joe Payne is the Director of Placement Services for the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. Since his tenure of October 2004, his Division has initiated a new statewide Classification system known as the Youth Level Services/Case Management Inventory or YLS. He has been a key component in instituting "PREA" throughout the

state of Kentucky in all community offices, group homes, day treatment centers, youth development centers and detention centers.

Mr. Payne has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and a Master of Arts in Administration. He has two children, a daughter age 13 and a son age 16, with whom he spends most of his spare time. Joe also provides

community support for good causes such as the Wayside Christian Mission.

His corrections history consists of 31 years at the Louisville Metropolitan Department of Corrections where he began as an Officer and spent the last 17 years as Deputy Chief.

DJJ Employee Nominates Gertrude Ramey for Honors

Green Tip:
Use your favorite coffee mug for coffee or hot chocolate. Insulated foam cups will stay in the landfill for thousands of years.

Remember to always
1) Reduce, 2) Re-use, and
3) Recycle!



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Juvenile Justice
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We're on the Web!
<http://djj.ky.gov>

On March 11, 2008, the Kentucky Commission on Women presented the 2008 Kentucky Women Remembered Ceremony, honoring three Women from across the Commonwealth for their determination, personal contributions and outstanding work.

DJJ employee Karen Sperry, from Catlettsburg, Kentucky nominated Miss Lyda "Gertrude" Ramey for her 45 years of hard work and dedication to the health and well being of children in the Boyd County area. Miss Ramey ran the Ramey Children's Home, located in Boyd County, until she was 79 years old where she took in and helped more than four thousand (4000) children. It is now part of the Ramey-Estep Homes, Inc. where DJJ places around 20 male and female youth. Throughout her years of service, Miss Ramey attracted many influential supporters who demonstrated an interest in the well-being of children. This need to give back led Miss Ramey to life-long friendships with people such as: Jesse Stuart, The Judd's, Senator John Sherman

Cooper, President Hoover, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dwight & Mamie Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy.

Miss Ramey was once a resident in the neighborhood where Mrs. Sperry grew up and Mrs. Sperry attended school with many of the children Miss Ramey provided care for. Mrs. Sperry worked for Ramey-Estep Homes, Inc for three years before working for the state and DJJ. This is where she began to understand the impact Miss Ramey had on the community and children's lives.

The honorees for Kentucky Women Remembered must meet these requirements for the candidates to be selected: must have been born in

Kentucky or spent a significant portion of her life in Kentucky, living or deceased, shown exemplary leadership and achievement in women's rights in Kentucky, and served as a role model for others in Kentucky.

The women also had to be nominated by completing an application, writing a biography of 500 words or less that concisely outlines her contributions to society along with a nominator's statement about the candidate's qualities, accomplishments, and contributions to society, which would encourage other women of the Commonwealth.



L to R: Karen Sperry; First Lady Jane Beshear; Eleanor Jordan, Executive Director of KY Commission on Women; Violet Taulbee and Irving Widner, the first girl and boy Miss Ramey fostered; and Gov. Steve Beshear with the portrait to be hung in the west wing of the Capital building. (photo courtesy of Stacy Little)