Summer is here! If summer is your favorite time of the year, you and I have something in common. For so many, it is the time of sunny weather and outdoor activities. It’s time for fireworks and holidays, slowing down, cold iced tea and even colder agua fresca.

In the last issue of the Family Connection, you had a chance to read about TJJD’s Alcohol and Other Drugs treatment program; this edition provides information about TJJD’s Sexual Behavior Treatment Program. Also in this issue, Part 2 of “Why is My Child Being Placed There?” focuses on TJJD Halfway Houses.

I understand that it may be difficult at times to enjoy summer while your child is in a TJJD facility, but I encourage you to visit as often as you can – either in person or through virtual visits – and participate in upcoming family day events when you can. If you need help with visitation, your Family Liaison may be able to provide some assistance. As the family featured in this issue’s “Family to Family” told us, “Push forward, no matter what obstacles come your way.”

Wishing you a summer filled with family love. It has been my pleasure and honor to serve you and your family, and I wish you all the best for the future.

Suzanne
Family and Community Program Supervisor

Tell us how we are doing at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Family2018 (English version)
Family to Family

When my child came into TJJD, we were devastated. It is something that you never think would happen to you or your child, and you are not prepared – not financially, physically or mentally. But here we are. It will be a year that he has been incarcerated, but we keep pushing forward. This has been an experience, and hopefully, our last experience. It has been difficult, we have had our ups and downs, and have dealt with depression. But you can’t be helpless or hopeless.

The most important thing I’d like to share is if you have questions, pick up the phone and ask. If you have concerns or complaints, pick up the phone. Even though there may be bad experiences, these can change if you ask the proper questions. A lot of parents and families don’t do that, but you have to keep pushing; be persistent, and pick up the phone. Always interact, stay in contact with staff and let them know that you are interested in your child’s well-being. It is important to speak on your child’s behalf. As with any job, there will be people who are there for a paycheck, and I feel bad that my son is aware of that at an early age. But he also knows that there are good people, and he has had TJJD staff who have pushed him to do his best.

Working with my child’s violent offender program coordinator was a benefit. She contacted the appropriate people for me to talk with, and to get our family to where we needed to be. Whenever we visited, she would say hello, give us updates on my son’s progress, and tell us what we needed to do. It’s also important to talk with the Family Liaison, and even the superintendent; you may not get someone right away, but if you leave a message, they will send you to the right person.

We look forward to my son’s return home, and we already know that he will keep going to church and have his Confirmation. He will also finish up his volunteer/community work, and hopefully he and his stepfather will start a landscaping business. My son has always been good with his hands, and really enjoyed being in the welding program.

This has been a long journey. Our child and our family are at the state’s mercy and we must comply with the state. We know we didn’t get here out of the blue, but hopefully this [halfway house] is our last stop.

I know that our children test the waters, first going ankle deep, then knee deep. Sometimes by the time they realize that they are away from the shore, they are in the water up to their neck. I know my son won’t be the same little boy he was before he went in [to TJJD], but he has learned about himself and has learned from his experience, and is not likely to put himself in this position again. He has told us that he is sorry he let us down. I don’t know where he went wrong, but I know now what to look for and how he can correct it.

Lastly, my message to my son is to push forward, no matter what obstacles come your way. Hold your head up and never be ashamed of scars or past experience – that is in the past. I believe you have a bright future ahead of you. I fought for you, and I hope you know that. ~ April R.

About the Sexual Behavior Treatment Program

The Sexual Behavior Treatment Programs (SBTP) are designed to help youth within TJJD identified as having low, moderate, or high sexual behavior treatment needs to stop victimizing others and to learn and apply skills leading to a more positive and safe re-entry to the community. Community safety and victim protection are critical pieces of all services provided to youth. Specialized treatment for sex offenders is provided at four TJJD institutions.

Youth who are in the SBTP receive additional individual and group counseling, education, and trauma resolution therapies for those with histories of abuse.

The most common sexual offenses that result in commitment to TJJD are aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, and indecency with a child. Youth who have committed sexual offenses also may exhibit a variety of other issues related to delinquent behavior, which are addressed as part of the intervention program. The SBTP addresses issues unique to the sexual offense(s) but also focuses on related issues that contribute to general delinquent behavior.

While in the SBTP, the services provided to your child are designed to target his or her specific treatment needs. TJJD offers a full array of services in our secured facilities, when your child transitions to a less restrictive environment (such as a halfway house), or is placed on parole. These services include short-term and intensive treatment, as well as sexual behavior aftercare. The programs are gender and age sensitive, and address the unique issues related to females, young offenders, or male adolescents with sexual behavior problems.

If your child is in the SBTP, he or she will have an individualized treatment plan that will guide him or her into making appropriate choices, while supporting community and victim safety. A realistic plan for your child’s transition to the community or a less restrictive placement will be developed, and services to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors for your child and family will be put into place.

If you have any questions about your child’s sexual behavior treatment program, please contact his or her case manager, Sherry Blatherwick at 512-490-7130 or Madeleine M. Byrne, PsyD, LCSW, LSOTP; Director of Treatment at the same number.

TJJD operates several halfway houses that provide a community-based setting for eligible youth. Typically, these facilities provide youth the opportunity to make gradual transitions from a secured facility/institution back into their home communities. When your child is moved from an institution, he or she may be sent to a halfway house for a period of time before returning home. While in a halfway house, your child will receive continued treatment, participate in community service, and may attend school in the independent school district or hold a job.

The following is a list of halfway houses operated by TJJD, and the programs that they offer:

**Ayres House** is located in San Antonio, Texas. The facility provides step-down services for boys across the state who are preparing for parole or who are eligible for initial placement into a medium restriction setting. This facility offers anger management, and aftercare services.

**Brownwood House** is located in Brownwood, Texas. As our only halfway house for the female population, it provides step-down services for girls from anywhere in Texas who are preparing for parole, and initial placement for girls who qualify for a medium restriction facility. This facility offers high and moderate substance abuse treatment, anger management, and aftercare services.

**Cottrell House** is located in Dallas, Texas. This facility provides step-down services for boys across the state who are preparing for parole or who are eligible for initial placement into a medium restriction setting. Due to the location of the facility, youth with any level of sexual behavior treatment need will not be placed at this location. Cottrell House also specifically takes in youth who have a need for independent living skills training as their release planning involves them living on their own. Cottrell House offers anger management, moderate substance abuse treatment, and aftercare services.

**Mcfadden Ranch** is located in Roanoke, Texas. McFadden Ranch provides high-level alcohol and other drug treatment. Boys with high substance abuse needs from anywhere in the state may be placed here if they qualify for initial placement in a medium restriction facility. Schaeffer House provides individual mental health counseling by on site mental health staff, moderate substance abuse and anger management, as well as aftercare services for sexual behavior treatment.

**Schaeffer House** is located in El Paso, Texas. It provides step-down services for boys across the state, but predominately from western counties, who are preparing for parole and initial placement for boys who qualify for a medium restriction facility. Schaeffer House provides individual mental health counseling by on site mental health staff, moderate substance abuse and anger management, as well as aftercare services for sexual behavior treatment.

**Tamayo House** is located in Harlingen, Texas. It provides step-down services for boys across the state who are preparing for parole or who are eligible for initial placement in a medium restriction setting. This facility offers moderate substance abuse, anger management, and aftercare services.

**Willoughby House** is located in Fort Worth, Texas and provides step-down services for boys across the state with a need for mental health services who are preparing for parole or who are eligible for initial placement in a medium restriction setting. On site mental health staff are housed at this location to provide moderate mental health treatment and aftercare services. They also provide moderate substance abuse, anger management, and aftercare services.

In the next issue of the Family Connection, we will focus on high and medium restriction contracted facilities.

If you have any questions about your child’s placement and treatment program(s), please contact his or her case manager, or Lisa Colin, Program Supervisor at lisa.colin@tjjd.texas.gov or 512-490-7036.

UPCOMING FAMILY DAY EVENTS

**JULY 20:**
McLennan (Mart)
For more information: Mary Garrity 254-297-8301 Mary.Garrity@tjjd.texas.gov

**JULY 28:**
Giddings
For more information: Jacqalyn Anderson 979-542-4573 Jacqalyn.Anderson@tjjd.texas.gov

**AUGUST 1:**
Gainesville
For more information: Robin Motley 940-665-0701 x268 Robin.Motley@tjjd.texas.gov

**AUGUST 18:**
Evins
For more information: Elva Benitez 956-289-5547 Elva.Benitez@tjjd.texas.gov

**AUGUST 31:**
Ron Jackson and Brownwood House (Brownwood)
For more information: Kevelle Bailey 325-641-4243 Kevelle.Bailey@tjjd.texas.gov

**OCTOBER 13:**
McFadden Ranch
For more information: Denise Caldwell 817-378-2127 Denise.Caldwell@tjjd.texas.gov

**NOVEMBER 17:**
Evins – Feast of Sharing
For more information: Elva Benitez 956-289-5547 Elva.Benitez@tjjd.texas.gov

**NOVEMBER 17:**
Ron Jackson and Brownwood House (Brownwood)
For more information: Kevelle Bailey 325-641-4243 Kevelle.Bailey@tjjd.texas.gov
The Importance of Family Involvement and Visitation

We encourage you to visit your child while he or she is in one of our TJJD facilities. Family visits are very important in helping your child to make progress while in TJJD. But did you know that research has found that youth in facilities who have regular family contact and visits actually do better in school and are involved in fewer behavior incidents than those youth who do not have regular family contact? Family visits may also help to reduce signs of depression and help with the stress your child may experience from being in a TJJD facility. Regular family involvement also helps to prepare your child for his or her return to home and community, and reduce the chances or seriousness of re-offending.

We understand that Texas is a large state and that distance and cost can be a factor in visiting your child. Your Family Liaison may be able to request financial assistance for a face-to-face visit, and can schedule virtual – Skype or FaceTime – visits between you and your child.

Each institution holds four Family Day Events a year, and halfway houses generally hold two events a year. This is a great opportunity to visit and play games or participate in other activities with your child.

If you are able to visit, it is important to know that all TJJD facilities have visitation rules that include (but are not limited to) the following:

- All visitors must be on an approved visitation list
- All visitors over age 13 must present proper identification in order to visit
- All visitors must abide by the facility dress code:
  - No shorts (Unless 13 years old or younger)
  - No miniskirts, see-through or sleeveless clothing, tops that expose the midriff, or any other clothing for visitors age 13 or older that is determined by staff to be too revealing, to short, or otherwise inappropriate. This may include clothes with holes in them
  - Suggestive, offensive, or derogatory body art must be covered (to the extent practical)
  - No clothing depicting drugs, sex, gang culture, obscene language, or disrespect to other persons or ethnicities

Facility Security Staff will make the final decision about the appropriateness of a visitor’s dress and/or if it complies with the visitation dress code.

Please also be aware of the facility’s visitation days and hours, and any limit to the number of visitors allowed for each youth. Visitors who are disruptive, don’t comply with facility rules or staff, or appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave and may be denied future visitation.

If you have any questions about visitation, including visitation rules and guidelines for your child’s facility, please contact your Family Liaison.