

TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE TODAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE
TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT



Grayson County “Houses” On Display

Two distinct “houses” are on display in Denison, Texas as the Grayson County Department of Juvenile Services continues to provide opportunities for its youth. The Department’s Victor House, a 2015 addition to the county’s post adjudication program, provides a new housing option for post adjudication youth. Residents that exhibit positive behavior can apply for assignment to Victor, which provides a less restrictive environment.

Victor House provides a therapeutic homelike environment, with open meeting rooms, study areas, an open kitchen and dorm rooms. The walls are decorated with colorful artwork, all produced by the youth who live there.

As an alternative program track, the Victor House emphasizes learning and interactions between staff and residents as well as independent living. The focus is on developing traits like positive leadership principles, personal accountability, and independent living skills. The residents will also have the opportunity to participate in vocational training such as construction and automotive maintenance and care.

“Previously, kids would come in and do well but receive little attention,” said Director of Grayson County Juvenile Services Brian Jones. “We wanted to reward that type of

Continued on page 4



The Victor House has a full-sized, spacious modern kitchen.

A Message From the Director [page 2](#)

David Reilly Receives Lifetime Achievement Award
[page 3](#)

Gainesville State School Celebrates 100 Years of
Service [page 5](#)

The House of Eli [page 6](#)

Former TJJD Youth Jason Wang Tours South Texas
[page 7](#)

Tarrant County Juvenile Board Appoints Medlin
Director of Juvenile Services [page 9](#)

Mart Staff Celebrate PREA Compliance [page 9](#)

Spotlight: Billie Jean Bram, Chief Juvenile Probation
Officer, Wharton County [page 11](#)

Fort Worth Resource Council for Youth Receives
Donation [page 13](#)

Taking PAWS To a National Stage [page 13](#)

Gainesville Celebrity Wait A Success [page 14](#)

TJJD Attends Historically Underutilized Business
Award Dinner [page 14](#)

Hooked on Books at McFadden Ranch [page 14](#)

Willoughby House Family Day [page 15](#)

Implementation of the Juvenile Probation Officer
Certification Examination [page 15](#)

Gainesville State School Youth Enjoy Special
Homecoming [page 16](#)

Giddings Hosts TJJD Staff Softball Tournament
[page 16](#)

TAC 341 Case Management Changes [page 17](#)

Upcoming TJJD Sponsored or Co-sponsored
Trainings [page 18](#)

Employees Receiving Tenure Awards [page 19](#)



A Message From the Director



David Reilly

Last month the Gainesville State School celebrated its 100-year anniversary. The school has had a long and vital history during that time, beginning as a school for girls and then transitioning to a juvenile detention facility for the Texas Youth Commission in 1971. I want to acknowledge the hard work of Mike Studamire and Deidra Reece for organizing the event. I enjoyed the celebration and was proud to take part in burying a time capsule that will be opened in 50 years. And, as a bonus, our beloved football team, The Tornadoes, won their homecoming game later that evening.

TJJJ implemented the automated certification exam for juvenile probation officers in September. After many years in the making, I am happy to see its existence come to fruition and believe it will be an additional level of credibility to our field for certified juvenile probation officers. Our goal is ultimately ensuring the mandatory topics are adequately trained so staff can successfully perform the duties of their position. Work on the juvenile supervision officer certification exam will soon begin and we are anticipating that this exam will begin an extensive pilot in January.

I'm also happy to report that we continue seeing success with the Regionalization efforts with our county partners. To date we have received 115 diversion applications, 59 of which have been approved, and 44 of those youth have had a hearing and sent to the approved placement by the local juvenile court.

The agency's new school year is off to a good start and I am proud of the efforts that have been and continue

to be made to transition to a new schedule. I am excited about the flexibility it provides for additional programming. Our education department continues to look for ways to improve youth learning and academic and I'm especially thankful to our state facility staff who are able to think outside the box on how to apply our resourcefulness in providing meaningful activities for our youth while they are not in class.

From a population perspective, from January to December, 2015, TJJJ saw a 10.8% increase in residential average daily population (ADP). Since that time the population has showed some signs of stability, but has remained elevated: the ADP through the end of FY 2016 was 1,330.65. This was above what we were appropriated by 5.3%. In FY 2017, our budget drops to a lower projected population, making the overage at the start of the year jump to 7.5%. We obviously will be monitoring this trend closely.

During the past few months, TJJJ has made two presentations in the lead up to the 85th Legislative Session which kicks off in January 2017. In August, we presented our legislative appropriations request (LAR) in a hearing to staff of the Governor's office, the Legislative Budget Board, the Speaker and Lieutenant Governor's offices, and other House and Senate staff. We were pleased by the interest of those who participated in the hearing and were asked many good questions. We have met less formally with many of those offices to discuss our LAR in more detail. These conversations have gone well and we are cautiously optimistic for the outcome of some of these requests during session.

Early in September we traveled to Dallas for a House Juvenile Justice and Family Issues hearing. We were

asked to discuss four topics: data sharing between TJJJ and DFPS, regionalization, potential raise the age legislation, and our initiatives and focus since last session.

It is also important to me that we be in lockstep with our county partners throughout session. We are one juvenile justice system. We met with many representatives from the field on September 21st to discuss how we can share information during session and be one voice. This was a productive meeting and I hope the first of many. I also intend to engage the presidents of the seven regions as a mechanism for communication during session and beyond. Historically this has been called the Presidents' Council. We are looking for a date in November to meet with this group to ensure that the avenues for communication between the agency and the field are wide open and consistent.

On a final note, I want to make you all aware of an act of kindness on the part of one of our staff members that received a great amount of attention. Lester Brown's selfless act of giving to help a school teacher in San Antonio resulted in a school supply company donating supplies for every student at Francis R. Scobee Middle School in San Antonio, an appearance on the Rachael Ray show, and a national movement with its own hashtag (#HundredDollarDeeds). It's a great story and one worthy of a few minutes of your time. Take a look [here](#). Thank you Lester!

As this issue of TJJ Today goes to press, we just learned that Teresa Stroud, our Senior Director for State Programs and Facilities, has just been elected to a seat on the American Correctional Association Board of Governors. This reflects positively on Teresa and on TJJJ. We'll have more information about this honor in an upcoming newsletter.



David Reilly Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

On Tuesday October 25, 2016 Texas Juvenile Justice Department Executive Director David Reilly received the prestigious Amador R. Rodriguez Lifetime Achievement Award during the Juvenile Justice Association Of Texas' (JJAT) Fall Conference in Corpus Christi.

The award is given annually to a juvenile justice professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the juvenile justice field. Mr. Reilly was nominated by his peers in the juvenile justice field and vetted by a committee of juvenile justice professionals. This prestigious award is recognition of Mr. Reilly's service to the youth in Texas. JJAT President Stephanie Fowler presented the award to Reilly during the awards luncheon. The Juvenile Justice Association of Texas is proud to include Reilly among the small number of previous recipients.

Reilly, who has served as TJJD's executive director since 2014, previously served as the Chief Probation Officer for the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department in San Antonio for 17 years. In that capacity, he oversaw a department that has 680 employees and operates three secure juvenile facilities, serving both pre-adjudication and post-adjudication youth. He has a combined total of 49 years' experience in the delivery of children and youth services in Texas.

Before joining Bexar County in 1997, Mr. Reilly served 23 years

with the state, with the last five years as the Director of Field Operations for Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services from 1992-1997. Prior to that, Reilly had served as Regional Director for Child Protective Services for 10 years in the San Antonio region and three years as Regional Director in the Austin region.

He began his career as a juvenile probation officer shortly after graduating from St. Mary's University in San Antonio with a B.A. degree in Psychology. After two years as a juvenile probation officer, Reilly returned to graduate school at Our Lady of The Lake University (OLLU) and received his Master of Social Work degree

in 1970. Reilly was selected as an Outstanding Alumni, OLLU in 1996. Reilly is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Amador R. Rodriguez, who the award was named for, worked in the Cameron County juvenile department from 1971 until his death in 2000. During his time there, he created a juvenile boot camp and an alternative education program. He was elected as the first president of the Juvenile Justice Association of Texas in December of 1999. JJAT is the largest juvenile specific trade organization in Texas, boasting over 500 members representing all of the seven regions from across the state.



David Reilly (left) receives the Amador R. Rodriguez Lifetime Achievement Award from Juvenile Justice Association of Texas Vice President Brandon Borski.



Grayson County “Houses” On Display (con’t)

positive behavior. Victor House allows us to be adaptable, to reward our kids who are doing well, and to provide specialized programming.”

Jones also noted that the less restrictive environment is conducive to family participation. Victor House isn’t just for senior level cadets and any level youth can be included if they are doing well behaviorally, emotionally, and educationally.

Their primary education will continue to be provided by Sherman Independent School District. In addition, residents within the Victor House have the opportunity to continue

participation in all of the programs as our traditional program.

Tiny House, Big Gains

In April 2016, the Department of Juvenile Services began the adventure of constructing their very own “tiny house.” Staff are using the experience of building the “tiny house” to introduce the world of construction and architecture to the young men they are working with, giving them introductory skills in a vocational trade.

One of the biggest obstacles staff and youth encountered was the Texas summer. Scorching heat and

rainy days stretched the project out longer than anticipated but the young men spent their time learning many skills that will be useful for them in the future, such as how to properly measure and cut wood, which tools are best utilized for projects, and using circular saws, carpentry squares, tape measures, drills, table saws, and many other tools.

Construction of the house continues today, with work taking place on the weekends now that school is in session. Once completed, the house will be used as a therapeutic counseling center, continuing to serve the youth of Grayson County.



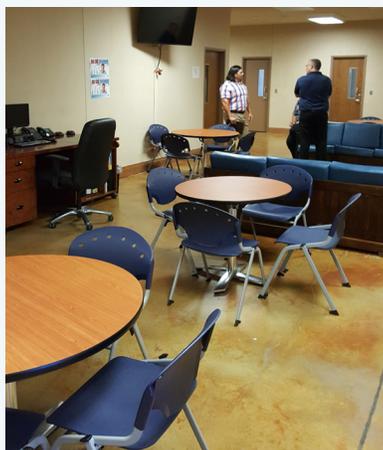
The Victor House has a full-sized, spacious modern kitchen.



Grayson County Department of Juvenile Services staff work with youth to deck their tiny house.



Day rooms with comfortable couches and tables make great meeting spaces and leisure areas.



Youth learn all aspects of home building, including putting in windows.



Gainesville State School Celebrates 100 Years of Service

The Gainesville State School celebrated its 100 year anniversary on September 30, 2016.

The Gainesville campus celebrated the event with a ceremony that included a proclamation delivered by Gainesville Mayor Jim Goldsworthy declaring September 30 to be “Gainesville State School Day.” One of the new sights on campus was a train engine constructed and painted by welding instructors and students. Also on display was the newly painted windmill adorned with a tornado.

A group of youth known as “Twelve” provided music during the ceremony. Executive Director David Reilly and Director of Programs and Facilities Teresa Stroud were in attendance and participated in the event, helping to bury a time capsule filled with present day photographs and memorabilia. It will be opened in 50 years.

Gainesville State School was originally opened as the Texas State Training School for Girls in 1916 with an enrollment of 18 girls. In 1948, the school was renamed Gainesville State School for Girls and in 1957, the 55th Texas Legislature transferred the school to the Texas Youth Council.

In 1971, the school became a co-educational juvenile correctional facility under the Texas Youth Commission. In 1988, the facility became a boys-only institution. Today, the school is operated by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department and houses more than 200 young men. The school offers a robust

menu of programming for young offenders, including a Sexual Behavior Treatment Program, and Alcohol and Other Drugs program, Violent Offender Program, Pairing Achievement With Service canine program, and the agency’s

Capstone program.

For 100 years, the Gainesville State School has been working to improve the lives of Texas youth. It remains a vital part of the Gainesville and TJJJ communities.



From left to right: Gainesville State School Superintendent Mike Studamire, TJJJ Director of State Programs Teresa Stroud, TJJJ Executive Director David Reilly and Gainesville Mayor Jim Goldsworthy use golden shovels to bury the Gainesville State School time capsule.



Staff and youth built a replica train engine to adorn the area where the time capsule is buried.

The House of Eli

Situated on a quiet corner lot in a Sherman, Texas neighborhood is a turn-of-the-century home recently renovated to its former grandeur. And just as the house has undergone a renewal, those living inside the house are engaged their own transformations.

House of Eli, Inc. is a transitional living home for boys ages 17-21. The driving force behind the home is Tawni Hodge, the home's executive director and visionary who has discovered an outlet for her concern for young men in difficult situations. Hodge has a passion and expertise in working with young men from her years as a foster parent and her experiences as a chaplain working with juvenile services. Her vision of a home where young men could grow spiritually and emotionally, learn life skills and make lifelong family connections was enough to convince local community and business leaders to provide the

necessary resources to make House of Eli a reality. Guidance is provided by Hodge, two additional house parents, and two live-in male employees who have other jobs or school during the day but live in the house full time.

Candidates for admission to House of Eli are typically at high risk for future incarceration and aging out of the juvenile justice or foster care systems. The youth must be recommended by a case manager, probation officer, chaplain, or teacher in order to be eligible for placement. Once accepted, they follow a structured daily plan focusing on education, specific job skills training, scripturally based recovery work, and constant exposure to Christian principles. The goal is to provide 12 months of intensive training and guidance in all aspects of healthy living.

House of Eli also maintains two businesses to provide job skills

training for the young men and income to help support the home. Eli Brothers is a real estate development company, buying, remodeling, and selling homes. It also provides moving services, landscaping, home staging, and working with realtors. Made New is a resale antique store that fixes and restores items donated by the community. House of Eli doesn't receive state or federal funds so all financial support comes from grants and private donations.

"House of Eli is a safe place where broken boys come to find a new life," Hodge said. "Living in a family setting, working in 'family owned' businesses and developing the disciplines to become strong men are the hallmarks of this year-long intensive life change academy. Saturated with the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, heart change leads to real life change. What could be a better investment than to give someone the tools to be free?"



This beautifully restored home has become a place of hope and restoration for The House of Eli.



A spacious and well-appointed kitchen is available to House of Eli residents.



Youth at the House of Eli all have home-like bedrooms.



House of Eli Executive Director Tawni Hodge displays the elegant but rustic dining room.



Former TJJD Youth Jason Wang Tours South Texas

In August, the Health and Human Service Commission, the Texas System of Care, and the Cameron County Juvenile Justice Department coordinated a Rio Grande Valley Anti-Stigma speaking tour with former Evins Regional Juvenile Center resident and now TCJC (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition) Board member Jason Wang. Jason shared his personal story of growing up in an abusive and poverty-stricken home and turning to a life of crime as his way of coping. He spoke words of encouragement and inspiration to youth and families involved with the juvenile justice system by highlighting his goals and accomplishments in an effort to eliminate the stigma attached to adolescents in the justice system.

Jason visited facilities in both Cameron and Hidalgo counties and dedicated an entire day to speak to youth and families at Evins Regional Juvenile Center, Edna Tamayo Halfway House, and the Harlingen District Office.

The Harlingen District Office would like to recognize the Harlingen Outreach Center, Baptist Children Family Services (BCFS), Gary Job Corps, Evins Regional Volunteer Council, and volunteer/mentor Esteban Sanchez for their support and contributions and especially the families of the Rio Grande Valley for attending and joining the Anti-stigma Campaign to create positive change. The families left the presentation with newfound hope for their sons and daughters.



Jason Wang

I Was One of Them

This story by Evins Community Relations Coordinator Fidel Garcia details Jason Wang's visit to the Evins Regional Juvenile Center.

As the juvenile judge echoed the words out, "because of your actions and in the best interest of yourself and the community, it is the opinion and decision of this court that you be remanded to serve 12 years in state custody," Jason Wang could not believe what had just happened nor that he would ever get out of the Juvenile Justice System, which had just handed him the biggest shock of his life.

"I won't lie to you, but when I got back to my cell at the county juvenile center, I cried and cried," said Jason, a former (TYC) TJJD student at the Evins Regional Juvenile Center facility. "I lived this life," he told a group of students gathered to hear his testimonial. "I was right here wearing the same shoes and uniform that you all are wearing. I was one of you," he said.

Sparing no details, Jason detailed his younger years living in Iowa,

growing up, and moving to Texas. His parents were immigrants and worked long hours and he attributes this to his father's temperament and physical abuse. "Growing up I was abused a lot by my father," he said. His father was always working late hours and wanted things done a certain way. With that, came the beatings. "I could never do enough," he said. Eventually his parents divorced and they moved to Texas. His mother knew he was getting into trouble but not the kind of trouble that he was headed for. Drugs and burglary to sustain his life style eventually opened the gate to juvenile state custody.

"What was worst for me was seeing my mother see me get arrested at our home after she had worked a 12-hour shift," Jason said. His life had swirled out of control and there was nothing he could do to contain it. "My mom had to take out all of her life savings to help me get an attorney. She always stood by my side, no matter what."

In a short period of time he narrated how he grew up in a family that came into the United States as immigrants. Soon after moving to Texas he started getting tangled with the wrong crowd; hustling, gambling, and using illegal drugs. One day he and his friends took it too far and burglarized a home and assaulted the homeowners. "We had a plan and we were going to execute it," Jason said. Once he got arrested, he realized his nightmare had just begun at the age of 15. For the next three years, Jason would

Continued on page 8



Former TJJD Youth Jason Wang Tours South Texas (con't)

wake up at 5 a.m. in a juvenile institution hundreds of miles away from home. One of them was Evins Regional Juvenile Center and the other one was Giddings State School, both facilities of the former Texas Youth Commission (now the Texas Juvenile Justice Department).

Fast forward 10 years and Jason finds himself right back at Evins where it all began. Except this time, he is free to leave when he pleases and he is here to offer words of encouragement, praise, and will power to juvenile offenders.

"I want youth to be able to do something positive for themselves, their families, and community," Jason said. "When I was locked up, my friends didn't visit me. It was always my family, yet, it was my friends that got me here," he said. When he left TJJD, he hung out less with his friends and more with his family. This was a turning point in his life.

Jason enrolled in college and he told youth gathered around him that just like he and his friends had a plan for the armed robbery that night, "it also takes a plan for you to get out of here and move on with your future." Jason recounted his stay at Evins and how he and several youth would round up stray cats and hide them in the locker of the dorm. "We would bring milk from the café and feed it to them."

Jason also recounted how he had started a GED study program while at Evins. "We were hungry, hungry for knowledge and to

learn and when someone took the time to teach us something, things took a positive turn." Jason's message was right on cue and to the point. When one youth asked him if he would hire him at his business, Jason replied that it depends on him and if he would be willing to earn a position with the company. He politely asked the youth when his release date was and the youth replied that he was copping out. Jason replied, "Oh, no, don't do that. That would signify failure and that you didn't work the program. People want to hire people who want to work and not those that want to give up. Leaving before you are ready, only means you'll be coming right back."

Speaking with youth, Jason recounted how volunteers had made an impact on his life. He remembered the volunteer that taught him lessons from the Bible, which inspired Jason to create a bible study within his dorm.

Jason also had words for staff that work with the youth day in and day out.

"I didn't realize it at the time, but I didn't appreciate the work that you all do. It's a really tough job. It doesn't get any easier and it's hard to see the fruits of your labor, but I want you guys to know that what you are doing is important, that it doesn't happen overnight, but holding these kids accountable and doing the great work that you do is truly making a difference. At the end of the day it is for something. These guys will remember it and whether or not they choose to do right in life or

they choose to keep going down their path, you are a big part of who they are."

One youth who was part of the audience and has been at TJJD for a little over a year, summed it up when he said, "He (Jason) was in my shoes. He gave me motivation. Everything he did, I did. He is the helping kind. If he can do it, I can do it."

Since his release, Jason has graduated from UT Dallas with a double masters (MBA, International Business), has raised over a quarter million dollars in private funding for non-profits, serves on the board of directors for the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, is featured in the hit documentary, Chasing Bonnie and Clyde, and is the CEO and Founder of Byte Size Moments, a company that leverages technology to foster positive relationships between loved ones. Jason was also scheduled to speak to youth at Tamayo House and Harlingen Parole later on that same day.

The visit was part of a series of events for the Anti-Stigma campaign coordinated and co-sponsored by Shannon Moreno, Mental Health Equity Coordinator, Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities, David McClung, Texas Institute for Excellence's Texas System of Care, Evelyn Zaragosa, Texas Institute for Excellence's ACCEPT Program, Rose M. Gomez, Deputy Chief Cameron County Juvenile Justice Department, and the Evins Volunteer Council.

Tarrant County Juvenile Board Appoints Medlin Director of Juvenile Services



Bennie Medlin

Following the July 20, 2016 meeting of the Tarrant County Juvenile Board (TCJB), chairperson Judge Mollee Westfall

announced in writing to Tarrant County Juvenile Services (TCJS) staff, "The Juvenile Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Bennie Medlin as Tarrant County Juvenile Services Director. Please join us in welcoming Mr. Medlin to his new position. We look forward to his continued leadership and service to Tarrant County as director."

Medlin brings to the position over 33 years of experience as a juvenile justice practitioner including positions at both the state and county level as well as in the private sector. At the county level, he worked at Dallas County Juvenile Department in positions ranging from Juvenile Detention Officer to Superintendent of the Detention Center. At the time of his appointment as TCJS Director he had been serving as TCJS's Deputy Director since January 2015 and served as the department's Assistant Director of Institutional and Educational Services from July 2005 until his appointment as Deputy Director.

Medlin has state level experience working for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice as Superintendent of the Polk Regional Juvenile Detention Center and Superintendent of the Leon County Juvenile Detention Center.

In the private sector, Medlin served as Chief Executive Office for Ramsey Youth Services and Youth Services International's Vice President of Operations. Medlin's academic credentials include a Master's degree in criminology and corrections from The University of Texas at Arlington and a baccalaureate degree in psychology from Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

Mart Staff Celebrate PREA Compliance

On Friday, July 8th, the staff of the McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility in Mart were honored for their role in helping the facility to achieve Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) compliance. The on-site portion of the PREA Audit was conducted in January 2016 and the facility received the final reports for official PREA compliance in May 2016. Not only was 100 percent compliance achieved but the campus actually exceeded standards in five areas. This

was a true accomplishment because no other facility has received five "exceeds" during this entire first round of PREA audits within the agency.

PREA Compliance Managers took an active role in ensuring that the staff were adequately rewarded for the dedication and hard work that was put forth towards accomplishing this goal. The PREA Staff Appreciation Carnival was a collaborative effort and sponsored through a partnership with the McLennan Police & Firemen's Insurance Association, TJJJ's own Unity

Committee, Administration, the Salvation Army, and other facets within the facility including, the Recreation Department, Maintenance, Training, and others.

The event included activities fitting of a carnival event, including sack races, putt-putt golf, hula-hoop contests, three-legged races, and a basketball shootout. Staff were encouraged to bring their children and enjoy the water slide. The Police and Firemen's Insurance Association provided brisket, beans, sausage, potato

Continued on page 10



Mart Staff Celebrate PREA Compliance (con't)

salad, and bread. The Unity Committee, in partnership with the Salvation Army provided hamburgers, hotdogs, condiments, water, Gatorade, and even homemade ice-cream. The recreation department provided popcorn and snow cones.

A dessert contest was also conducted as one of the activities of the day, which

included judges from local affiliates within the community, including Pizza Pro, a member from the Police & Firemen's Insurance Association, and Central Office representation by way of Dr. Madeline Byrne.

A special schedule was also developed to allow staff on the dorms to participate in the picnic for at least 30 minutes.

Door prizes were awarded every 15-30 minutes and included everything from restaurant gift cards, picnic coolers, mugs, plants, blankets, and many other usable items.

The event was a tremendous success and staff appeared to truly appreciate all of the efforts that were put into celebrating their PREA achievements.



Mart staff were able to enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs and homemade ice cream provided by The Unity Committee, in partnership with the Salvation Army.



Staff gather as food is being prepared in celebration of the Mart complex achieving PREA compliance.



Staff visit in the shade during the PREA achievement celebration.



Staff were given PREA Compliance appreciation tee shirts to celebrate their accomplishment.



SPOTLIGHT



Billie Jean Bram **Chief Juvenile Probation Officer,** **Wharton County**

What led you to your career in juvenile justice?

I would say God did. As a child I was raised in a very dysfunctional family. My siblings and I were involved at one point the Child Welfare Department, leading to us being placed in a children's home in Arkansas for a period of time. Eventually my mother was able to get her life together to get us all back, but there was still continued dysfunction.

When I was in high school, I wanted to be a social worker to help children. However, I did not go that direction. Instead, I enlisted in the U. S. Army for several years and came home, married, and had a family. It was not until my youngest daughter was in high school, and I was working at Wharton County Junior College that I started going to college on the Hazelwood Act, which was available to people who have served in the military and entered and exited the military with Texas as its home of record. It was with this grant paying for my tuition that I was able to work towards a degree.

Initially, I thought I wanted to be a teacher. However, while working

on my degree, I gravitated towards communications and criminal justice classes. After I received my degree from the University of Houston Downtown, I went to work at the Wharton County District Attorney's office. During the two years that I was there, I pursued and earned an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal Studies. In 2009, I went to work for Adult Probation where I was the High Risk Caseload Officer. During my two-and-a-half year tenure at Adult Probation, I aided in the facilitation and implementation of programming and supervision that was client-centered, but also focused on having "no more victims." In my supervision, I was especially sensitive to youthful offenders and those who had been victims of violent crime. When the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer position became vacant, I felt called to apply for the position, and that it was where I was supposed to be. After submitting my application, I read everything I could find on juvenile justice topics, including much literature on evidence-based practices. I have been here for four and a half years. I felt that there was a plan for me to be here, so I am now able to work with juveniles and their families and provide for some of their needs in the gaps that exist within the juvenile justice system. I went to work of Wharton County Juvenile Probation November 1, 2011, and TJJD was born in December.

So when I say that God led me to the Juvenile field it's because I feel that He truly did, giving me the opportunity to work with youth and their families, whose needs I feel I can personally relate. So many of our juveniles have unseen needs such as sexual abuse, mental and physical abuse, mental health needs and parents who just do not know how to parent. It is not always about the offense; it's what led up to the offense.

What types of facilities do you operate?

Our department does not have a detention facility. Our Department consists of three officers, one administrative assistant and me.

What programs do you feel have proven most successful?

My proudest accomplishment has been working around the transportation issues by finding locations that we can have the provider come to the juveniles and their families. Our department has been able to bring services to the juveniles and their families in the town where they live by working with the local library for space. This has helped us get juveniles and their families to the services helping eliminate the transportation issues we have had in the past. We have been able to contract services and bring them to our county from Fort Bend County and Harris County

Continued on page 12

SPOTLIGHT con't

and to offer in home family therapy, aggression replacement training, individual therapy and counseling. One of our local licensed professional counselors was a crisis center counselor, and she helps our youth and parents deal with different types of abuse as well as anger issues. We have learned that one service does not serve all. Each family and each child is an individual with individual needs.

What do you see as the biggest challenges for juvenile justice in Texas?

The biggest challenge is our mindset and the mindset of others. While we may have fewer juvenile referrals, the ones we are getting are much more intense. The mental health issues, the number of girls and boys who have been sexually assaulted and are victims and who are also probationers has risen dramatically. They need more services than we can afford, so we work with different organizations to provide these services. The juvenile we are seeing today has higher needs than we have seen in the past. Sometimes we see so many needs, it is hard to prioritize and know where to start.

This is where a validated assessment comes in to help us make that determination. As we have learned, it has to be used properly for it to be applied with any success. My department uses the Noble assessment, and it has been effective for us. I was able to go to an American Probation and Parole Association national training last summer and hear how other states treat juvenile offenders and what they are doing to help and deter them from state facilities. They all talked about using

validated assessments, and they appear to be more about assessments and about rehabilitation for juveniles to help with recidivism.

Are there any changes that you are considering in your county?

We are a small county and we, like everyone else, have gotten budget cuts the last 4 years. Due to these budget cuts, we look to start using in-house, officer-driven programming workbooks and journals. The families and the juvenile will work together at home. Our officers will then go over the material with them to discuss the positive and negative issues. This not only reinforces the materials learned, but facilitates positive interaction between the juvenile and the family and the juvenile and the officer. One of our officers and I are trained to teach NCTI classes if the need arises to teach classes.

What do you want others to know about your department?

My department has dedicated officers who are sometimes the only stable influence in the lives of our juveniles and their families. They are willing to work with each family and help give them the hope they need to move forward in a positive manner. Each juvenile is important to us and our mission is to provide for the care, the protection, and wholesome moral, mental and physical development of children coming within its jurisdiction.

When you are not working, how do you spend your time?

I have been blessed with three beautiful grandchildren who I keep as often as I can; thankfully, they live close by so I see them quite often.

I am very involved in my church where I serve as Vice-President on our Christian preschool board. I enjoy working at my church helping wherever I am needed. I am part of the community Manna Meals program where we feed the hungry of body and soul twice a week. I serve on the Women's Crisis Center Board of Directors as Secretary, and I work in the community raising awareness of abused women and children in our county.

What is the best part of your job?

The opportunities to bring hope to the juveniles and their families that we work with, so that they can break the generational cycle that some of them are in to become a successful member of our community. We always enjoy getting graduation cards, seeing our juveniles do well in sports and academically or having them come up and talk to us at Wal-Mart to tell us how well they are doing. The best part is knowing you touched their lives in some way.

What advice would you give to a young new juvenile justice professional?

This is not just a job; this is a calling. You have to have a real interest in wanting to work with juveniles and their families. Change is something that is always happening in the juvenile world, and you have to be willing to learn and to accept change. Though we may not see success immediately with our juveniles, you must remember that you have planted a seed that you can only hope will take root. Hopefully, you will be the one who can give them the hope that they need to become successful. It is one of the most rewarding experiences you will ever have.



Fort Worth Resource Council for Youth Receives Donation



The Fort Worth Resource Council for Youth (FWRCY) recently accepted a \$125 donation in gift cards from employees at BBVA Compass Bank branches in Fort Worth. The FWRCY is the non-profit that supports the youth at Willoughby House and the youth on parole in Tarrant County. Pictured from left to right: Heidi Howard and Maria Lopez of BBVA Compass, Warner Filley and Carol Kenel with the FWRCY and Stephanie Henderson, who is with both BBVA and the FWRCY. Stephanie made the donation possible!

Taking PAWS To a National Stage

By Cris Burton

(TJJD's Cris Burton was invited to present the Pairing Achievement With Service program at the American Correctional Association at the organization's August 2016 meeting in Boston. The following is his report on the presentation.)

"The 146th National Congress of the American Correctional Association has accepted your proposal."

If you would have told me this when Holli Fenton and I started PAWS in 2010, I would have said you were not playing with a full deck. But, in 2016, this is now a reality. The chance to talk about PAWS on a national stage and to colleagues in the field of corrections was an honor and somewhat overwhelming. When I think about what it took to get here, it is and continues to be an incredible journey. The ACA conference in Boston was certainly a pinnacle experience. One highlight of the conference was the opening Keynote from Governor Charlie Baker and

guest speaker journalist David Gergen. Both had insightful comments on the corrections industry and on the current political atmosphere.

The PAWS workshop, "Canine Programs in Juvenile Justice," was well received. There was a wide range of attendees from counselors and social workers to wardens. All had some



familiarity with canine programs and the wardens, in particular, from Alabama and Georgia, were already running adult canine programs. Many had questions about juveniles working with dogs. Some of the comments ranged from, "Everyone should attend this presentation," to "We need more presentations on Juvenile Justice." Everyone in

attendance seemed to agree that the PAWS program is unique in that PAWS has an intentional therapeutic design, where other canine programs tend to concentrate on the outcomes of the dogs, especially in the adult programs.

As the journey continues, there are too many to name for the success. Much, if not most, of the credit has to go to Holli Fenton and the incredible staff at Ron Jackson that have hung in there over the last six years and have made PAWS the success it is today. Also, Deidre Reece and the staff who are just getting started at Gainesville are doing a great job continuing the PAWS legacy.

Look for PAWS at the upcoming Texas Correctional Association (TCA) Conference December 1-2, 2016 in Round Rock and at the Counsel for Juvenile Corrections Administrators (CJCA) in association with the ACA Winter Conference in San Antonio, January 22, 2017.

Gainesville Celebrity Wait A Success

The Student Support Council for the Gainesville State School recently held their annual “Celebrity Wait” with a stellar roster of waiters. Local celebrities who pitched in to help raise funds included State Representative Drew Springer, City Manager Barry Sullivan, Sheriff Terry Gilbert, Director of Economic Development Arlene Loyd, and Texas Juvenile Justice Administrators Chip and Rebecca Walters.

Many other popular Cooke county residents such as Dr. Larry Sears, United Way Executive Director Angie Hare, First Presbyterian Minister John Hare, Abigail’s Arms Staff Maria Najera and Jessica Chambers, Gainesville State School

Superintendent Mike Studamire, Assistant Superintendent Deidra Reece, and Chaplain Dennis Banks helped the cause and helped raise \$2,700. The entertaining evening was held at Luigi’s Italian Restaurant.

One guest, Anita Schwartz, who was visiting from Austin exclaimed, “I have never seen so many happy people in one room! Everyone had a wonderful time and the food was delicious. It is always great to help a good cause.”

The money will be used to purchase clothing, toiletries, and bags for youth, bus tickets for family members to visit youth, scholarships for college, graduation supplies,

sports banquets, meals for youth who leave campus to play sports such as football, incentives for youth, success documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, and state identification cards, and many other needed items.



State Representative Drew Springer serves Richard and Linda Lira at the Celebrity Wait held at Luigi’s Restaurant.

TJJD Attends Historically Underutilized Business Award Dinner

In August, TJJD purchasers attended the eighth annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner hosted by Texas Institute for Blind and Handicapped (TIBH). More than 400 guests were at the event, including 43 award nominees, their family, and friends. Those in attendance recognized TIBH, its Community Rehabilitation Program and their employees for their contributions to the Texas State Use Program.

For the third consecutive year, TJJD was recognized as being in the top 10 of all state agencies as having the highest dollar amount of purchases through the State set aside program from TIBH. TJJD is in an elite group that included some very large agencies (TxDOT, DSHS, DARS, TDCJ, and TCEQ). Congratulations to TJJD’s purchasing staff for working hard this past year to keep us in the top 10.

Hooked on Books at McFadden Ranch

The McFadden Ranch Book Club, begun in July by Superintendent Jimmie Prince, has spurred great interest among the youth. The club meets weekly, when they discuss their current book selection and also watch the movie made from that book to determine the differences and similarities



between the book and the movie.

So far, youth have read *The Boy in The Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green, and they’re currently reading *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan.

One youth discovered that sometimes the characters don’t look as they were described or even imagined in the book. He said that in *Holes*, the main character is

fat in the book but he’s not fat in the movie.

The books come from the Lewisville Library which puts together “Book Kits” for all ages. The kits consist of four to six copies of a book and a study guide. Superintendent Prince checks out the Book Kit and Volunteer and Reading Tutor Barbara Sutherland leads the weekly group. She said it’s exciting to see the boys reading and getting something out of the books.

Willoughby House Family Day



The Potter's House of Fort Worth graciously hosted the 2016 Willoughby House Family Day event on Saturday, July 23. An impressive turn out of the Deacon Board and TJJD volunteers and mentors helped make the day a success.

Youth and family members enjoyed

the festive atmosphere, played games and had a picnic lunch.

Volunteer Mentor and Fort Worth Resource Council for Youth member Latasha Walker conducted a mini workshop on communication skills and Parole Officer Jeffrey Manuel shared with youth and parents the rules of parole.

Implementation of the Juvenile Probation Officer Certification Examination

The Juvenile Justice Training Academy has worked diligently over the last year with the Regional Training Officers, other statewide stakeholders, and the Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) to develop an automated competency exam for applicants seeking certification as a juvenile probation officer. Beginning September 1, 2016, all individuals seeking a new certification as a juvenile probation officer are required to successfully pass the automated JPO Certification Exam prior to being certified by TJJD.

TJJD worked in partnership with CMIT and two urban departments to pilot the exam over a five-month period. A total of 52 people took the test during the pilot, equating to 22% of the total number of new JPO certifications from last fiscal year. The pilot allowed TJJD to gather data to adequately address major issues before the exam went live statewide.

The exam is comprised of 60 total questions. Twenty questions are the same for each exam and were determined to be the most important. An additional 40 questions are randomly generated

with at least three questions from each mandatory topic. Probation departments can best prepare staff for the exam by using the most current training material and curriculum from TJJD's Training Resource webpage.

The exam costs \$20 per person/per attempt that is made payable to Sam Houston State University (not TJJD). TJJD left the discretion of payment to the hiring authority on how this fee is paid. Last fiscal year, there were a total of 234 new juvenile probation officers certified statewide.



If an employee takes JPO Basic through CMIT, the exam is proctored by staff at CMIT on the final day of basic training. Departments providing their own training will proctor the exam. When an applicant takes the exam, the score will be sent to the applicant, the department's designated proctor and TJJD. Applicants will have three

attempts to pass the exam. Those needing to register as a proctor should contact TJJD at exam@tjjd.texas.gov.

At this time, TJJD is only implementing the certification exam for juvenile probation officers. The Juvenile Justice Training Academy will pilot an exam for juvenile supervision officers no sooner than January 2017, with an anticipated effective date of September 1, 2017. The JSO exam will be taken by significantly more staff; it is a goal of the Juvenile Justice Training Academy to make the JSO exam available for a reduced or no cost. TJJD will send out additional information as it becomes available.

TJJD has developed a number of resources to assist departments with implementing the JPO Certification Exam. All information may be found on the Training Academy's website [here](#). As with any new process, this is a work in progress. TJJD will continue to analyze the data as people take the exam to ensure the fidelity and appropriateness of the test questions and the exam meets our intended goals. TJJD looks forward to continued feedback.

For more information, please contact Kristy Almager at 512.490.7125 or Kristy.Almager@tjjd.texas.gov or Chris Ellison at 512.490.7245 or Chris.Ellison@tjjd.texas.gov.

Gainesville State School Youth Enjoy Special Homecoming

Gainesville State School celebrated this year's Homecoming with a pep rally in the campus gym and halftime activities at their final football game. Gainesville High School demonstrated their kindness and generosity as they allowed the State School youth to use their beautiful stadium. To top off the festivities, the Gainesville Tornadoes won the game, defeating Chico 32-27.

This year's homecoming was a special one with retired staff and successful alumni joining the festivities. They had returned to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the facility.

The homecoming court consisted of five seniors. They were given the traditional armbands made from garters decorated with bells, miniature helmets, footballs, players, and ribbons. The Student Council and staff provided music, skits, and entertainment at the pep rally. Coach Henry Thomas delivered his annual address and reminded the team to believe in themselves.

Youth Zachary sang a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem to begin the game. During halftime, the homecoming court was once again announced. As each senior walked out to the center of the field, a brief bio was

given and the crowd showed their appreciation.

This year's king, Elliott, was chosen by a campus wide vote. All 260 youth at the facility were allowed to vote for one senior who demonstrated positive behavior, academic success, and was a good role model.

The Gainesville community surrounds the State School youth with tremendous financial, spiritual, and volunteer support. Lives are being changed as youth understand, many for the first time, that there are people who truly care for them.

Giddings Hosts TJJD Staff Softball Tournament

On August 27th, Giddings State School hosted the Annual TJJD softball Tournament at Giddings, Texas. Despite a difficult start, with teams battling wet fields, humidity, and mosquitos, all teams brought their best. Congratulations to the Evins team who took first place, the Ron Jackson team who took second, and the Mart and Giddings teams who came in third and fourth respectively.

The day was more than just a game or tournament; it was a chance for coworkers to come together and get to know each other outside of work. "It was a long day, but the memories that formed along with the new friendships...priceless," said JCO IV and Giddings tournament organizer Julius Castillo.

The Giddings State School Staff Quality Improvement Group (SQIG) was on site keeping everyone's thirsts quenched and bellies satiated with a full concession stand serving drinks, nachos, sausage wraps, and other game time favorites.



The Giddings State School Staff Quality Improvement Group (SQIG) kept a fully stocked concession stand to ensure all teams had plenty to eat and drink.



Friendly rivalries were renewed on the softball field on a hot August day.



The Giddings Indians staff softball team displays their teamwork and colors.



Plans are already underway to renew the tournament next year!



TAC 341 Case Management Changes

As many of you are aware, Texas Administrative Code Chapter 341 pertaining to General Standards for Juvenile Probation Departments has recently been amended as recommended by the TJJD Advisory Council's "Standards Committee" to become effective January 1, 2017. While each subsection of Chapter 341 was scrutinized and amended as deemed appropriate, for this article, I would like to focus specifically on the philosophical tenets behind the changes to case management and how those changes should help improve youth outcomes across the state.

The goal of the Standards Committee was to revise case management in such a manner as to adhere to current research and best practices, while at the same time making it an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand, and invaluable tool in helping to foster improved youth outcomes across the state.

The Committee believed that case plans should be built, in large part, from the criminogenic findings indicated on a validated risk/need instrument thereby ensuring what is addressed are the dynamic risk factors most strongly related to recidivism and other important youth outcomes. Criminogenic Needs may be defined as those issues, risk factors, characteristics, and/or problems that relate to a person's risk of reoffending.

It was important for the committee to have a working

knowledge of what is meant by a "validated instrument" since we were making the assumption that a case plan be built from a validated risk/need instrument. In general, validity speaks to the truth of a given proposition, inference, or conclusion. When referring to assessment tools, validity generally refers to how well an assessment measures what it intends to measure. While there are several types of validity, an instruments degree of "predictive" validity is perhaps most important when discussing risk/need assessment.

Predictive validity is a specific type of validity that helps to address the question, "Does this assessment measure what it is intended to measure and can the results be used to predict things about the participants?" As the name implies, "predictive validity" addresses how well a specific tool predicts future behavior.

For example, to be a validated risk/need instrument, it should, with some accuracy, be a predictor of future involvement in delinquent behavior. If the instrument has an acceptable degree of predictive validity, then Juvenile Probation Officers should be confident that building a case plan from such findings will prove profitable to the success of the probationer.

It was believed by the standards committee that this approach to case management would enable Juvenile Probation Officers to better distinguish between high, medium, and low risk juveniles, thereby helping officers better direct services to target those specific criminogenic factors most closely associated with

delinquency and to do so in such a manner as to make it likely that the child will profit from the intervention.

TAC 341 revisions were driven by the belief that sound case management is based on the following literature-supported concepts:

- Risk Principle of Case Management - Higher level of services are reserved for probationers with the highest level or risk; and lower level of services are reserved for juveniles identified as low risk to recidivate.
- Needs Principle of Case Management - Interventions should target those criminogenic needs that are more likely to lead to recidivism and delinquency.
- Responsivity Principle of Case Management - Interventions should be presented in the most effective manner for each individual child.
- Professional Override Principle of Case Management - Considering the risks, needs, and responsivity, decisions are made as appropriate under the prevailing conditions.

While there is some debate within the literature regarding what risk factors most closely constitute criminogenic need, the following domains are widely considered valid as such.

- Prior & Current Offense.
- Family Circumstances/ Parenting - inadequate supervision, inconsistent parenting, etc.

Continued on page 18



TAC 341 Case Management Changes (con't)

- Education/Employment - low achievement, truancy, problems with teachers, class disruptions, etc.
- Delinquent Peer Relations
- Substance Abuse
- Leisure/Recreation - limited organized activities, no personal interests, etc.
- Personality/Behavior - aggressive, poor frustration tolerance, inflated self-esteem, impulsivity.
- Antisocial Attitude - not seeking help, defies authority, actively rejects help, etc.

Responsivity Factors are learning styles, abilities, interests, and other unique considerations including characteristics of the person delivering the service. Styles and modes of service, as much as practical, should be matched to the learning styles and abilities of juveniles so that the juvenile is more likely to profit from the particular type of service provided. Responsivity factors are not necessarily related to criminal activity but are relevant to the way in which a youth reacts to different types of interventions

In summary, taking all of this information into consideration, the Standards Committee recognized the importance of building a case plan that address criminogenic risk factors and as such made recommended changes to TAC 341 that would require a single case plan, built from the criminogenic findings indicated on a validated risk/need instrument, updated monthly, become the guiding light for the child throughout his/her tenure on juvenile probation resulting in maximum opportunity for positive change to occur.

Upcoming TJJD Sponsored or Co-Sponsored Trainings

Strengthening Youth and Families Conference

November 7-10, 2016

Sheraton Arlington Hotel - Arlington, TX

[Click here](#) for additional information or to register.

Training for Trainers: Mandatory Topics for JPO/JSO Basic

November 14-17, 2016 (30.5 Hours)

Williamson County Juvenile Probation - Georgetown, TX

[Click here](#) for additional details or to register.

New Chiefs Development Program

November 28-December 02, 2016 (30.25 Hours)

Sam Houston State University CMIT - Huntsville, TX

[Click here](#) for additional details or to register.

Training for Trainers: Mandatory Topics for JPO/JSO Basic

December 12-15, 2016 (30.5 Hours)

Cameron County Juvenile Probation - San Benito, TX

[Click here](#) for additional details or to register.

30th Annual Juvenile Law Conference

February 27-March 1, 2017

Horseshoe Bay - Marble Falls, TX

[Click here](#) to register.

2017 Chief Probation Officers Conference

October 1-4, 2017

Galveston Convention Center and San Luis Hotel - Galveston, TX

[Click here](#) for additional details.

Upcoming TJJD Sponsored Webinars

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

October 11, 2016 (2.00 Hours)

Texas Juvenile Justice Department - Austin, TX

[Click here](#) to register.

Cultural Diversity

October 13, 2016 (2.00 Hours)

Texas Juvenile Justice Department - Austin, TX

[Click here](#) to register.

Employees Receiving Tenure Awards

TJJD would like to recognize the following employees who have received a tenure award since August 2016. On behalf of the agency, we extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for their dedication and service to the State of Texas.

August 2016

FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Alejandro Moncivais | <i>Evins</i> |
| Johanna Jimenez | <i>Evins</i> |
| Johnathon J. White | <i>Giddings</i> |
| Miguel A. Arigullin | <i>Evins</i> |
| Patricia L. Galindo | <i>Evins</i> |

TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bernice Alfaro | <i>McLennan CSJCF</i> |
| Bertha M. Huggins | <i>Ron Jackson</i> |
| Carl L. Taylor | <i>McLennan Phoenix</i> |
| Carla A. Bennett | <i>McLennan CSJCF</i> |
| James . Rogers | <i>McLennan Phoenix</i> |
| Marybel Sanchez | <i>Austin (General Counsel)</i> |
| Monique L. Henderson | <i>McLennan CSJCF</i> |
| Serena Madlock | <i>Brownwood HWH</i> |

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Dominga T. Garcia | <i>Giddings</i> |
| Galina Stepanova | <i>Austin (Finance)</i> |
| Robbie L. Stork | <i>Giddings</i> |
| Sydney C. Falke | <i>Giddings</i> |

TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Juan J. Quiroga | <i>Evins</i> |
| Lysandria L. Haywood | <i>McLennan CSJCF</i> |
| Melissa K. Ferguson | <i>Ron Jackson</i> |
| Susan R. Lang | <i>McLennan CSJCF</i> |
| Todd M. Novak | <i>Houston District Office</i> |

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| David J. Reilly | <i>Austin (Executive Office)</i> |
| Rebecca A. Walters | <i>Austin (Youth Placement, Re-entry and Program Development)</i> |

