



# Division of Youth Services: Keys to Success

By: Michael Dempsey, Executive Director of the Division of Youth Services

Throughout 2009, the Division of Youth Services has been focused on establishing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model as the foundation for providing services to the youth in the Indiana Department of Correction's (IDOC) care. This model is a proven approach to providing effective and successful services to adjudicated juveniles in secure correctional facilities. The foundation of this program is based on a fundamental set of values and principles which are important to understand in order to achieve successful results.

## Balanced and Restorative Justice Philosophy

The foundation of restorative juvenile justice practice is a coherent set of values and principles, a guiding vision, and an action-oriented mission.

## Principles of Restorative Justice

- Crime is injury.
- Crime hurts individual victims, communities, and juvenile offenders and creates an obligation to make things right.
- All parties should be a part of the response to the crime, including the victim if he or she wishes, the community, and the juvenile offender.
- The victim's perspective is central to deciding how to repair the harm caused by the crime.
- Accountability for the juvenile offender means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done.
- The community is responsible for the well-being of all its members, including both victim and offender.
- All human beings have dignity and worth.

- Restoration—repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships in the community—is the primary goal of restorative juvenile justice.
- Results are measured by how much repair was done rather than by how much punishment was inflicted.
- Crime control cannot be achieved without active involvement of the community.
- The juvenile justice process is respectful of age, abilities, sexual orientation, family status, and diverse cultures and backgrounds—whether racial, ethnic, geographic, religious, economic, or other—and all are given equal protection and due process.

## The Restorative Justice Vision

- Support from the community, opportunity to define the harm experienced, and participation in decision making about steps for repair result in increased victim recovery from the trauma of crime.
- Community involvement in preventing and controlling juvenile crime, improving neighborhoods, and strengthening the bonds among community members results in community protection.
- Through understanding the human impact of their behavior, accepting responsibility, expressing remorse, taking action to repair the damage, and developing their own capacities, juvenile offenders become fully integrated, respected members of the community.
- Juvenile justice professionals, as community justice facilitators, organize and support processes in which individual crime victims, other community members, and juvenile offenders are involved in finding constructive resolutions to delinquency.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Guide for Implementing the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model: (<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/implementing/foreword.html>)

The Balanced Approach Mission Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the balanced approach mission.

With this philosophy in mind, each of the IDOC's juvenile facilities have been working to establish programs consistent with the model's values and principles, some of which include the Graffiti Removal Program at Camp Summit Boot Camp, the Salvation Army project at Logansport, the Habitat for Humanity project at Pendleton Juvenile, and various community service projects at the Madison, Northeast, and South Bend Juvenile facilities.

## Keys to Success

While these are all wonderful programs that aim to make a positive difference, the fact of the matter is that we can best impact the development of our youth and make the most difference in their lives by ensuring that we are always good role models and, perhaps most importantly, that we care and will always perform our duties with vigilance and a high degree of awareness to protect and maintain everyone's safety.

When working with juveniles, we each have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to make a difference in their lives. We must all keep in mind that these youth are still developing and maturing physically, emotionally and psychologically. Through our daily contact and interactions with them we will, in one way or another, shape

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and influence their development. It is incumbent upon us all to ensure that our daily influence is a positive one. We must continuously interact with our students in a manner which establishes ourselves as good role models, no matter how frustrating the situation may become.

It is critically important that staff develop total awareness skills to help in the daily supervision of our students. Staff must be able to interact with students, perform multiple duties and tasks, while at the same time maintaining constant and vigilant supervision and awareness of all activities taking place within our areas of responsibility. These are skills which must be learned and developed in order to be successful and effective juvenile correctional practitioners. Finally, the most important key to success is the fundamental, inherent personal trait of simply caring about the youth and services we provide. This is by far one of the most frustrating and challenging careers in our field. We can not be successful as individuals or as an agency if we do not care about what it is we are doing or about the youth we are here

**FIGURE 1. The Balanced Approach**



to serve. Our juvenile correctional facilities serve as a snapshot of our communities. What these youth see, hear, learn and experience there can set the tone for the kind of citizens they mature and develop into upon re-entry. Serving as good role models and

fostering care and influence over their development must remain our highest priority and something that is reflected in our daily work habits. ■

## New Castle Facility Makes Donations

By: Mike Smith, Public Information Officer—New Castle Correctional Facility

On Thursday, November 19, 2009, New Castle Correctional Facility (NCCF) staff and offenders presented the Westminster Community Center with a \$10,000 check, which was used to buy clothing and toys for 90 underprivileged children in the New Castle area during the holiday season.

The money raised by staff and offenders for the Westminster Community Center was done through

a series of food sales throughout the year and in conjunction with New Castle's package sales program where offender's families can purchase approved items for the offenders to receive a couple times a year.

On December 8, 2009, 45 NCCF staff purchased needed clothing and toys for each child, and on December 9, NCCF offenders wrapped each present individually and placed



NCCF staff and offenders present the donation check.

them in a box marked for each child. This program provided each of the 90 children who otherwise would not have any presents \$100 worth of clothing and toys for the holidays. ■