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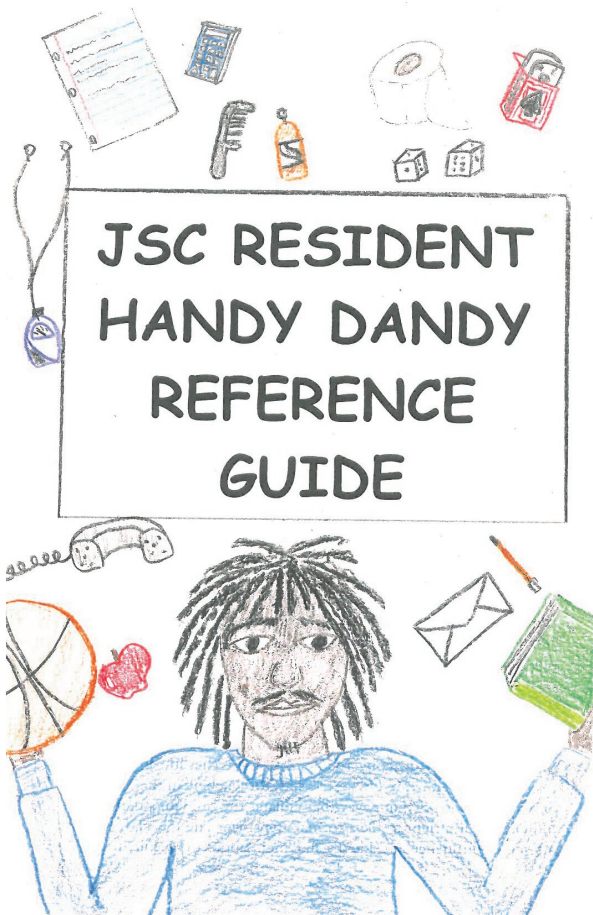
JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE — JDAI

“IT MAKES IT MORE LEGIT, . . . YOU KNOW?”

Julius (*not his real name*) who is in the Dakota County Juvenile Services Center (JSC) Long Term Program is talking about the work that he and other members of the JSC Juvenile Advisory Council or JAC put in to revise the JSC Resident Handbook. The JAC is a group of residents whose goal is to provide ideas and feedback for staff on ways to improve the facility’s safety and services. The group, which is made up of residents who have demonstrated responsible behavior and earned the privilege of attending, meets monthly over pizza. The JSC JAC membership is necessarily fluid as residents complete their programs and leave the facility, but overlaps enough to maintain discussion and momentum on projects. The revised Resident Handbook was hammered out over the course of five months, according to Beatrice Officer, a JSC Case Manager and Probation Officer who helps facilitate the group. One of the JSC residents produced the book’s art, including the cover pictured below.

Julius said the new handbook was “pretty cool” and easier to manage than the original version. Said Officer of the original, “It read a lot like an encyclopedia. Not exactly kid-friendly.” Every juvenile who comes to the facility receives a Resident Handbook, which explains facility rules and expectations, as well as residents’ rights.

The Handbook is just one of the JAC projects. More recent discussion has been about making recommendations to revise the JSC policy on who can come to visit residents in the facility. “We were thinking about uncles and grandparents, too. And maybe younger siblings and nieces and nephews,” Julius said. “You get in here and you miss everyone. You just want to make the relationships better.”



To be a successful member of the JSC JAC, residents must be able to function civilly in the group. “We talk about stuff. We disagree, but we figure it out,” Julius said. “Like with family engagement, we didn’t all agree, but we put in extra effort to find a solution for everyone. It is good to find a solution as a group.” Sometimes members were disappointed when their ideas were rejected, such as with bringing younger siblings, nieces and nephews for visits. “But it made sense why they couldn’t do it,” said Julius. “It’s for safety. Plus it would be hard to concentrate with them running around the room.” It was the same thing with the JAC discussion about having family members bringing food into the JSC. “At first it was like, ‘My mom brings me a meal – cool!’ But then it’s unfair to others whose moms don’t do that,” he said. “It might create fights and arguments, and that’s a dumb argument to have. So we decided not to ask any more about it. And besides, you can get home passes and get all the food you want.”

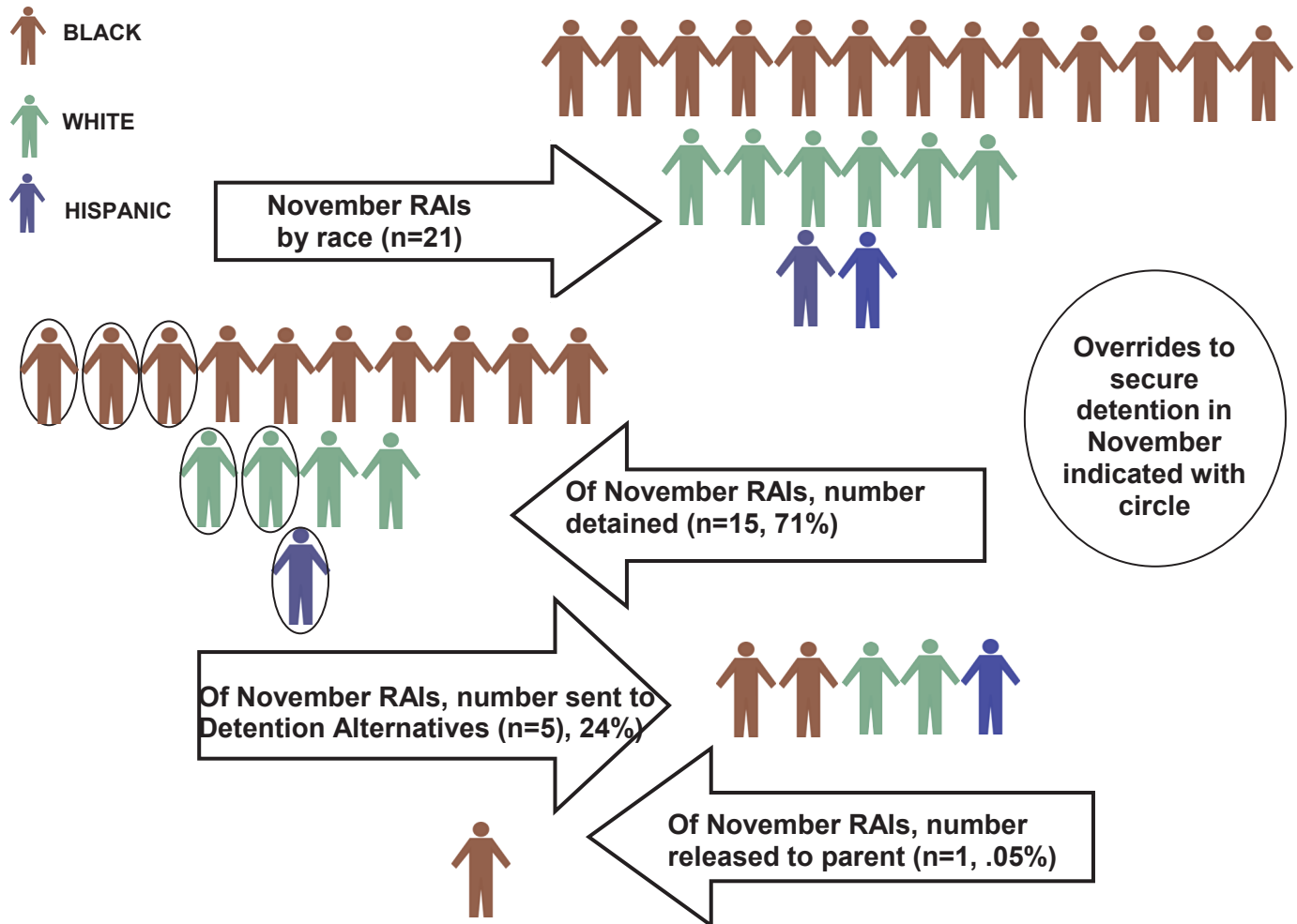
The JAC is working on a recommendation about having a therapist available during facility visits to help families communicate in positive ways, Julius said. “When you get out of here, you want to have better relationships with your family. You don’t want it like it was before, you want to keep yelling at a minimum. It would be cool to have someone right there to help you practice talking.”

The JSC JAC is the facility’s answer to the Community JAC, which has been in operation since early 2014. Funds to support both groups come from a grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs and the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

For more information about the JSC JAC and its projects, contact Beatrice.Officer@co.dakota.mn.us

Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI): November Screening Results

Dakota County's Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) is the product of collaboration of Community Corrections, local law enforcement, the County Attorney's Office, and public defenders. According to Minnesota state law, secure detention can only be used between the time of arrest and first court appearance if a juvenile is a risk to public safety, and/or at risk of failing to appear for his/her first court hearing. The RAI uses objective criteria to determine a juvenile's risk level. Juveniles who pose low levels of risk are released to their families. Those who pose moderate risks may be sent to detention alternatives such as a shelter or foster care, while juveniles who pose the highest risks are held in secure detention at the JSC. RAI results may be overridden under certain circumstances by a judge or a JSC supervisor.



Placement Decisions by Race: 2015 Year-to-Date

Outcome	White	Black	Hispanic	Am. Indian	Asian	Total
Released to ATD*	38	22	10	0	1	71
- Shelter	30	21	5	0	1	57
- GPS	2	0	0	0	0	2
- House Arrest	6	1	5	0	0	12
Released to Parent/Guardian	10	13	2	0	0	25
Held in Secure Detention	62	52	14	4	1	133
Total	110	87	26	4	2	229

* Alternative to Detention

2015 JDAI Workplan Update

ELIMINATING RACIAL DISPARITIES (ERD) COMMITTEE

The ERD Committee received updates about the recent JDAI Executive Committee meeting and the work being done to launch the *Deep End* Initiative. The group then continued discussion about strategies to bring the School Resource Officers (SRO) perspective into the group, since they have so much direct, day-to-day interactions with young people, particularly those who exhibit disorderly conduct and other behaviors that could bring them into contact with the juvenile justice system.

Some members of the ERD Committee were scheduled to meet with SROs in mid-December. (See below for summary of that meeting).

The next ERD Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 23, 2015, in the JSC Training Room, noon –1:30 p.m.

JUVENILE ADVISORY COUNCIL (JAC)

The Community JAC continued its work on a brochure targeted to juveniles that explains collateral consequences and the process for seeking record expungement. A representative of the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services will present to the group on December 17, 2015.

The Juvenile Service Center (JSC) Staff Council discussed the upcoming JSC JAC presentation of recommendations to increase family engagement. The group was open to hearing from the youth, and was excited to find ways to support the continuation of the JSC JAC.

SRO ENGAGEMENT

Representatives from the ERD Committee met with Dakota County SROs on Thursday, December 10, 2015 to explore ways to involve SROs in JDAI generally, and the ERD Committee specifically.

The SRO group includes officers who are new to their assignment and may not be familiar with JDAI, so ERD Committee representatives provided an overview of the history and accomplishments of Dakota County JDAI. They also reviewed how the Dakota County Attorney's various diversion programs work. Featured was the Disorderly Conduct Diversion Program, which is targeted to students whose behaviors in school put them at risk for referral into the justice system. Judge Michael Mayer followed with a description of how judges typically handle juvenile DOC cases.

SROs provided ideas to improve and possibly expand diversion programs. They also agreed to participate in the work of the ERD Committee.

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SO LONG, CARMEANN!

Carmeann Foster, Dakota County's amazing JDAI Coordinator, has decided to move on. She leaves behind a body of work that means much to the people Community Corrections serves. She was instrumental in launching the Community and JSC Juvenile Advisory Councils, the school-based Skills/Leadership Groups, and the Community Coaches Program. She was also the key staff person for the JDAI Executive Committee and the ERD Committee. She made sure that JDAI partners gathered, analyzed and used data to keep Dakota County's momentum on juvenile justice reform.

Carmeann is passionate about justice for juveniles, and will be continuing her work with system-involved juveniles in the metro area, and will be completing her Ph.D. We expect to hear a lot more from her over the years.

For more information on JDAI please contact:

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