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JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE — JDAI

HARBOR SHELTER & COUNSELING CENTER



A safe place to heal and grow

Harbor Shelter has been a staple of the Dakota County juvenile services system in one way or another since February 1986, adapting to changes in service demands and needs with the times. Today, Harbor Shelter is an 18 bed facility located in Hastings, MN. It serves males and females, ages 12-18.

“Right now, it is mostly court placements,” explained Harbor’s CEO and owner Rod Stivland. “We don’t get many voluntary placements anymore. Through the end of November [2015], we had 211 court ordered...and just 31 voluntary placement agreements.” Harbor Shelter is the most frequently used of Dakota County’s detention alternatives. In 2015, 59 (80%) of those placed in detention alternatives went to Harbor Shelter.

Stivland, who founded Harbor Shelter in Stillwater, MN, is also the facility’s therapeutic director and administrator. He said that some years ago, those figures would have been reversed – most placements

were voluntary, with few ordered by the court. “The court’s role has been changing,” he said. “We changed too.” At one point, Harbor had three facilities in operation – the original Stillwater site, then Burnsville in 1988, with the Hastings site following in 1994. “Hastings made sense for a lot of reasons,” he said. “We looked there for a couple of years because of its proximity to the courts. It is close to Washington County which also uses us. Then the old convent site became available, and it was a wonderful site for us. It was 10,000 square feet that would allow enough room to serve as many kids as our other sites, plus allow room for offices and school program.” Stivland said that the Burnsville site closed in 2005, followed by Stillwater in 2009, but the Hastings site continues to be strong.

The average length of stay at Harbor Shelter is 14 days, with a quarter of all juveniles admitted staying only 1-2 days. Only a handful stay for 90 days, according to Stivland. Most of the juveniles have a constellation of issues when they come to Harbor, including trouble in school, running away, and “always having trouble at home.” Harbor staff takes whatever time they have with each juvenile, “whether it’s one or two or three days” to help him/her cool off and figure out next steps. Stivland said that he’s noticed a larger portion of juveniles coming through his doors as having mental health issues and on medications, so his staff works to help them connect with therapies once they leave Harbor. With time, he said, “you get to know the kids pretty well. We have a couple of girls who are just now, after two weeks, starting to talk about the abuse they’ve suffered at home. You have to get past the first stuff they show you.” It helps, he said, when parents are willing partners. Stivland spoke of one girl whose mother, a likely drug addict, is not interested in getting help for herself. “At least we will be able to give good information to the next agency providing services. They will know more about the family.”

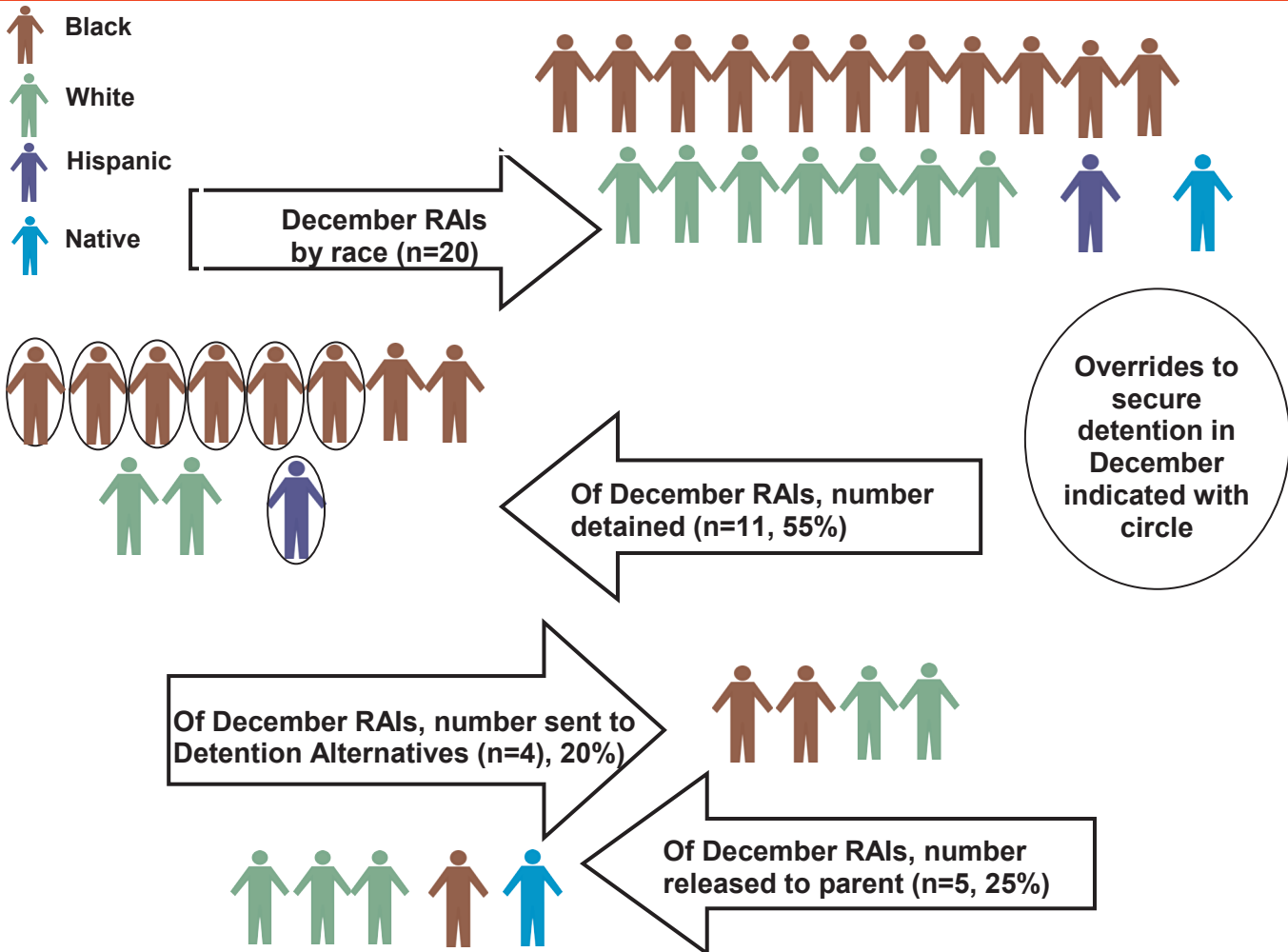
Harbor Shelter residents have days that look much like those of any teenager – up for the school bus in the morning (classes are at Hastings Middle School), returning by around 2 pm, followed by group discussions (boys and girls are in separate groups). Staff members supervise recreational time, whether it is pool or foosball in the basement, basketball or walks in the park. Residents eat together, help with clean up, do homework, and may see parents in the evenings. “Everyone’s in bed by 9:30,” Stivland said, “and they are ready for it.”

Much of the work Harbor Shelter staff does with residents is around developing and maintaining healthy relationships, Stivland said. “Sometimes kids get into it with other kids. The point is to practice settling down, finding ways to talk things out, and get to the positive. That way,” he said, “kids learn that resolving conflicts works.”

For more information about Harbor Shelter, contact Stivland at RodStivland@msn.com

Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI): December 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*	40	24	10	0	1	75
- Shelter	32	23	5	0	1	61
- GPS	2	0	0	0	0	2
- House Arrest	6	1	5	0	0	12
Released to Parent/Guardian	13	14	2	1	0	30
Held in Secure Detention	64	60	15	4	1	144
Total	117	98	27	5	2	249

* Alternative to Detention

2015 JDAI Workplan Update

ELIMINATING RACIAL DISPARITIES (ERD) COMMITTEE

ERD Committee members learned that one of the Community Coach Program vendors chose not to renew its contract. County staff is working with another vendor, Model Cities, Inc., to cover the gaps as much as possible while also looking for a new vendor.

The group discussed results and next steps of a meeting held with the school resource officers (SROs). Staff will follow up with SROs to arrange on-site meetings with SROs and school administrators to get details on how the ERD Committee can support schools' and SROs' efforts to manage disorderly conduct behaviors so that youth avoid the justice system but also to assure safe learning environments.

Much of the Committee's 2016 workplan is focused on moving the Casey Foundation's *Deep End Initiative* forward, the group learned. The initial data set and systems analysis materials were approved for submission to the Casey Foundation. Committee members will be involved in the next steps, including an anticipated visit by Foundation staff.

The next ERD Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 28, 2016 in the JSC Training Room, noon –1:30 p.m.

JUVENILE ADVISORY COUNCILS (JAC)

The New Chance Juvenile Advisory Committee (JAC) convened its inaugural meeting in December, 2015. New Chance is Dakota County's day treatment program for juveniles on probation. Four individuals attended the meeting. The group learned about the work of the Cook County, Illinois JAC, as well as what the Dakota County Community JAC and the Juvenile Services Center (JSC) JAC have done. New Chance JAC participants discussed possible topics for their workplan such as possible evening programming and ideas for more "fun" activities.

The JSC JAC's December meeting included 12 participants, six of whom have been at previous JAC meetings. The group reviewed work on the revision of the Resident Handbook and recommendations it made for engaging families. Members suggested new items for discussion: developing a canteen at the JSC and making provisions for special visits for siblings who are younger than 18 years.

The Community JAC also met in December with guest speaker Meghan Scully, an attorney with the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS). Scully explained the expungement process for juvenile offenses. The Community JAC continued work on a brochure about the process.

FATHERS—NO MATTER HOW YOUNG— ARE IMPORTANT TO THEIR KIDS

A recent piece from the Urban Institute (UI) described home visiting programs that target teenaged fathers, particularly those in what were called "high-needs" communities. The article pointed out that while teen fathers face lives of lower earnings and additional stresses than those who have children later in life, they are still important in the lives of their children:

"Research has shown that children with engaged fathers have better cognitive development, exhibit fewer behavioral problems, and do better in school. In other words, having an involved dad helps put children on the right track."

UI research into successful home visiting programs that engaged young fathers found that they had common characteristics:

- *"Defining fatherhood...by showing [young fatherers] how to contribute to their children's lives in material and emotional ways.*
- *Relationship education...promoting communication and understanding between parents...teaching about coparenting..."*
- *Working within fathers' schedules and commitments"*

The article resonates because of anecdotal information provided by Dakota County probation officers about their juvenile clients who are also fathers. One probation officer said that at one point during this past summer, five of the young men on her caseload were the fathers of a total of 11 children. All of them wanted to be involved in their children's lives, but had little support and role modeling. This probation officer helped each of the young men work with County Child Support staff on financial matters, and with local social services organizations on supporting them as they established relationships with their children.

The Urban Institute article can be found at <http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-do-you-teach-kid-be-dad?>

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