

Reentry Services Project:
Report to the
Minnesota Department of Public Safety
and the
**Joint Advisory Committee for the Restorative Justice Program &
Reentry Services Project**



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PROBLEM SOLVING PARTNERSHIPS
PROGRESS REPORT, QUARTER 10
OCTOBER 1, 2011-DECEMBER 31, 2011
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1. Project Implementation:

The Reentry Services Project (RSP) in Clay County, MN began in July 2003 and continues today with funding from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs and the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative. The program aims to improve public safety by assisting youthful offenders in successful community reentry following out-of-home placement. Two Transitional Coordinators (TCs) work with juvenile Probation Officers (POs) and community-based service providers to identify client specific needs and employ comprehensive case management services. The program seeks to improve public safety by preparing incarcerated juvenile offenders for successful reentry from criminal justice placements to communities.

The RSP is designed to begin at upon entry to the placement facility and to continue for approximately six months following release to the community. In 2010, the program added an additional component (pre-placement) to enable staff to work with high risk youth in an effort to prevent an initial out of home placement. As of December 31, 2011 the Reentry Services Project had 194 closed reentry case files and 10 closed pre-placement files. An additional 20 cases are currently active, 12 of which are pre-placement files. During the most recent quarter (October 1, 2011-December 31, 2011) a total of 26 youth were served by the program and 6 cases were closed. The average time in the program for these closed cases was 13 months.

The average age of the clients this quarter was 16.3 years. Eighteen (69%) of these clients were male; eight (31%) were female. Seventeen (65%) were White, two (8%) were Native American, seven (27%) were Hispanic.

Specific program objectives include:

A) Reducing recidivism by improving strengths and reducing risk/needs of juvenile offenders transitioning to their home communities by incorporating a three phase design to ensure continuity in services from placement to the community.

- During the past quarter, out of 17 aftercare youth, 2 were adjudicated a probation violator and placed in detention for 30 plus days and none were adjudicated for new offenses. One was in foster care for part of the quarter and one entered Job Corp. 15 clients had no violations of their probation.
- Of the 9 pre-placement youth served this quarter none were adjudicated for a new offense. Two were adjudicated probation violators. One was placed in inpatient treatment followed by a

half-way house and the other was placed in a short term detention stay. One client voluntarily entered an inpatient mental health facility. 7 had no violations of their probation.

- RSP clients are assessed within 30 days of intake and upon closure of RSP services using the YLS/CMI diagnostic instrument. This instrument measures risk/needs and strengths. Of the 6 youth who were discharged this quarter, all 6 had these 2 assessments completed. There was a 31% reduction in the risk/needs score on the YLS and a 53% increase in strengths noted.
- Transitional case plans were created for each of these clients. These plans included goals and tasks in three general categories (competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety). Of the 6 youth discharged from the program this quarter, 4 successfully complied with their case plans and two were closed as it was determined that the clients had received the maximum benefit from the program.

B) Strengthening families of youthful offenders to facilitate youth adjustment and transition to the community.

- A strength based family assessment/services were completed with 9 families this quarter. 4 families refused this service and 9 were previously assessed or involved in family based services. 3 clients were 18 or older and a family assessment was not appropriate and one client entered Job Corp.
- 21 families participated in other family strengthening services in the community.
- 12 families participated with their child and transitional coordinator in outings together in the community.
- 11 families received an individualized packet of information about services available in the community.

C) Improving collaboration, coordination, and access to community resources for high risk youth and their families.

The joint Restorative Justice/Reentry Services Project Joint Advisory Committee met on November 3, 2011. The Advisory Committee consists of 30 community partners who are involved in youth issues, thereby increasing collaboration across systems. These partners represent the county commission, law enforcement, schools, Mental Health agencies, Social Services, MN CEP, corrections, County Attorney's office, parents, youth agencies and the Clay County Collaborative. The committee meets quarterly in an effort to increase the community's awareness of youth issues and increase the community's role in affecting positive change for youth and their families. In 2009, a PATH foster parent and a staff member of a local faith-based organization joined this group and have provided valuable parental and faith-based input. A result of the formation of these strong partnerships has been solid community support for the RSP, a construction of open, routine communication among agencies and the willingness of the Clay County Collaborative to continue to provide financial support for the RSP in the upcoming fiscal year.

In 2010 the decision was made to combine the reentry services project collaborative work group with the RSP/RJ Advisory Committee. The collaborative work group was formed to provide guidance in regard to program development and the ongoing implementation of the program. The program has been in existence since 2003 and this level of involvement is not needed at this point in time. Many of the members of the collaborative work group were also members of the RJ/RSP Advisory Committee. In an effort to be respectful of community member's limited availability and time a decision was made to combine these groups.

The two staff employed by the program work on a daily basis with community agencies to increase community awareness of the issues facing youth who are returning to the community from out of home placement. Examples include being a part of wraparound teams, working with a homeless youth steering committee to address the needs of homeless youth in the community, working with cultural groups to increase opportunities for youth in the community, working with community members to increase job opportunities for youth, presenting and having group discussions on youth issues at the local alternative school, etc.

Through the program youth are provided the opportunity to restore the harm they have caused to the community and victims of their crimes by completing community work service, writing letters of apology, etc. under the direction of the Reentry staff and/or a local law enforcement officer. Youth are also given the opportunity to participate in a Restorative Justice process, coordinated by the Clay County Restorative Justice coordinator.

2. Staffing:

No new staff was hired during this quarter and there are no current vacancies.

3. Project Outcomes:

During this quarter we continue to increase collaboration between systems in Clay County by implementing a family strengthening component to the Reentry Services Project. We are collaborating with Clay County Social Services and local mental health agencies to complete a strength-based family assessment on the youth of families referred to the program, if appropriate. Implementing a family strengthening component to the program has generated positive changes in both clients and their families, both as individuals and a family unit.

During the 2010-2011 school years, our female Transitional Coordinator co-facilitated a girl's group with the school social worker at the alternative school and detention center. The group was so successful with the young women involved that they have requested that they be allowed to join the group this year. Therefore, two groups were formed this year, one involving girls that were previously involved and a new girls group. The girls previously involved will also be asked to be mentors for the new group. In addition, our male Transitional Coordinator has begun to co-facilitate a boy's group with our School Resource Officer located at the middle school alternative center this semester. Both groups focus on gender specific issues, teaching cognitive/behavioral skills and making informed, positive decisions.

In the spring of 2011, our staff was approached about the possibility of collaborating with the alternative school and a community sponsor to provide art opportunities for high risk youth in the community. Youth and staff participated in this program twice a week from June through December. Youth earned school credit by their participation. This program introduced youth to Yoga, a music promoter, glass blower, newspaper editor, a florist and other artists in the community. Each artist shared their story with the youth participants. Youth were given a chance to ask questions and get involved with some of the artists creations. Each adventure also provided an opportunity for youth to talk about an issue they were dealing with or trying to change. Participants were encouraged to think how they could make changes in their lives and finding different outlets for their passions.

A highlight of the program for Youth was getting to meet and working with the drummer for Sheryl Crow's Band. Additionally, youth worked on their own movie where they were the director, actor and editor. In December a grand finale to the program was held at a local theater where youth were recognized and honored for their accomplishments. (See attached comments from youth)

Family participation in RSP activities in the community continues to be emphasized and supported by providing mentoring, transportation and financial support for these activities.

Two family therapists that are assigned to the Reentry Services Project were invited and have been participating in the RJ/RSP Joint Advisory Committee that meets quarterly to review program objectives and share information on youth opportunities and programs in the area. The family therapists also meet bi-monthly with the juvenile probation agents, the Reentry staff and the program administrator to review cases and provide updates.

The staff focused on the following 5 reentry components during the past quarter with the 26 clients who participated to increase the likelihood of positive change in the youth and families they work with:

1) Obtaining and retaining employment or education

- 24 clients were enrolled in school and all 23 regularly attended. 2 clients had their GED or had graduated. 1 client had continuing truancy issues.
- Employment was appropriate for 24 clients, and 13 were employed sometime during the quarter, all working part-time. 16 clients searched for a job this quarter.

2) Maintaining a stable residence

- 22 clients lived at home with their parents, one entered Job Corp and 2 were in foster home placement. 2 clients were homeless this quarter and both were able to obtain housing.

3) Successfully addressing substance abuse issues

- 11 clients admitted to using alcohol or non-prescribed mood altering substances. Of the 12 clients needing CD services, 10 received these services.

4) Successfully addressing mental health issues

- 6 clients received a MAYSI mental health screen this quarter.
- 21 clients had a mental health diagnosis. 1 additional client was deemed to be in need of an assessment, but refused services. 17 of the clients with a mental health diagnosis participated in mental health services, 1 refused and 3 other did not need ongoing services.
- Three clients were in need of and received a physical health assessment.

5) Establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community

- 15 clients were involved in gender specific activities; 12 in culturally specific activities; 24 clients received cognitive/behavioral interventions; 25 were involved in learning independent living skills; 26 were involved in pro-social activities; 10 participated in volunteer work in the community; 16 completed court ordered community work services; 21 clients identified as having some pro-social peers and 23 stated they had a positive role model in their lives. 1 youth this quarter admitted to gang affiliation.

4. Feedback:

Comments from **Youth** as to what is helpful or what they liked best about the program:

“The support I got”.

“That I got help for my problems”.

“Like the activities, like guitar”.

“Helped me get my 1st job”.

“The fact that I got almost all of my community work service done”.

Comments from **Parents** as to what is helpful or what they like best about the program:

“She is there if I need to talk. She does help me and my son”.

She helped him get a job, she is there for him, if only he would contact her more often”.

“Very helpful”.

“Helped to get him a job”.

“A...is more positive about the good things and doesn't feel he needs to be with his friends all the time”.

“A... and our whole family are getting along a lot better, he doesn't seem so angry”.

5. Illustration: (submitted by Sally Lauritsen and clients)

Reentry Services supports clients by encouraging them to try new things, ie: activities they wouldn't normally want to be involved with. This past summer and fall several Reentry Services clients participated in an art educational class sponsored by RRALC (Moorhead Public School District alternative school). Clients were given school credit and had fun while discovering the Arts. These types of programs help develop positive self-esteem and confidence. In this particular class clients learned to be less judgmental of others who might seem different and they also learned past mistakes don't have to interfere with future success. The Art's class allowed clients to discover their creative side while having sober fun! Another benefit for clients was the capacity to participate in a group setting to talk about issues (anger, bullying..) then share problem solving techniques. Reentry Services Transitional Coordinators transported their clients and participated in the program as well. As TC's, we collaborated with RRALC staff in the beginning to develop and implement the program. This ongoing relationship allowed us to develop a better bond with clients, this inspiring them to be successful in other goals, i.e., employment, education, family, sobriety. Reentry Services and RRALC are hoping to find funding to continue the Art's program and collaboration with local artists and colleges throughout this year as well. Reentry Services had two clients write letters about their experience which are attached at the end of this report.

6. Barriers: (submitted by Michael McMullen, Transitional Coordinator)

Responsibility

While working with teens, a person needs to understand they want responsibility. However, many times they cannot handle the weight of the responsibility. Their families have never shown them how to stick with a task. They might become unmotivated with the duration they have to continue with being responsible. Additionally, mentally they might not be able to function accordingly with the requirements surrounding the issues. When putting responsibility on our clients we have to focus on what they are going to be able to be successful doing.

When our clients start our programs they tend to each say the same thing: "I don't need your help". So we give them task they should be able to accomplish, such as filling out a job application, starting on their homework, calling a chemical dependency treatment facility. The majority of the time the client returns with nothing accomplished, saying the task was too great or they didn't understand what they were doing. They couldn't handle the responsibility. Kids see their parents behaving in an irresponsible way and mimic those actions. They believe someone else will "do it" for them.

Parents have been asked from the time their children are babies to spend time with them, read to them, and talk with them. However, many of the parents we work with don't take the time to do these simple tasks. They start teaching our clients from an early age to be irresponsible. Many times our families are on several different programs and only have to show minimum requirements to get maximum benefits.

Then our clients are able to get on similar programs and their parents will not let them work because they would lose their benefits, teaching more irresponsibility.

Some of the clients we work with struggle to stay motivated. They don't want the responsibility and do whatever they can to get away from getting back on track. Many of these clients have little chance to see improvements due to their current mental state. Only when the client wants to make a change are they able to start working towards making responsible decisions. At times, a client who has used drugs heavily, or has been victimized; suffer from mental health issues that may interfere with their ability to act responsibly.

These clients understand some of the steps they need to do. However, if they haven't worked through their past issues or are not chemical free, they struggle with taking the necessary steps to show they are capable of getting more responsibility. Until they start the work, we need to hold their hands and make sure they are able to get tasks completed. We need to make sure the responsibility we place on our clients is something they will be able to handle and complete or we will be setting them up for failure. Many times, just getting the taste of success will help a client to want more responsibility and hopefully they will be able to start being autonomous.

7. Evaluation:

As of July 1, 2010, we no longer are contracting with North Dakota State University to complete our quarterly evaluation of the grant objectives. Information will continue to be gathered from the Transitional Coordinators, Probation Agents and community partners through quarterly reports, CSTS records and surveys. This data will be compiled quarterly by the grant administrator and Transitional Coordinators.

8. Revisions Necessary:

Personnel category needs additional funds applied. This is the final FSR for this grant period.

Requesting the following transfers:

1583.96 from payroll taxes and fringe to personnel

504.38 from travel to personnel

514.19 from training to personnel

292.83 from office expenses to personnel

2737.54 from program expenses to personnel

What I Experienced in Art Adventure

Well my first experience was working at the Stray Crow concert. I have to say I really enjoyed it and at that time in my life I was ~~get~~ struggling with depression and anxiety and doing that really helped me ~~th~~ with my depression and anxiety. I got to meet new people, see a concert, and meet one of the band members which I really thought was interesting by just talking to him about music and he even gave us his e-mail address to contact him about whatever, so I really appreciated that experience. One of my favorite experiences in art's advent is when I got to play with him. Not only was it fun playing with him but it was very motivational listening to his story and how he struggled in life and where he is at now from where he was in life. All in all I think Art's adventure is a great program. I think it would keep kids out of trouble and probably help them with any mental health issues they are going through. ex: yoga and just support from your peers and staff. I would really like to see this program going and I think it would be a shame if it stops.

Cage ~~██████████~~

Before I was in Arts Adventure I was a person who thought things like laughter yoga was just a stupid thing that people laughed at but when I started joining in more and more in the classes it started to feel natural. As a person myself I have a lot of confidence issues and Arts Adventure helped me gain more and more confidence in myself where we go to making dream catchers where I am talented at to making movies which is something I've never done before and for people constantly cheering us on and telling us not to give up. So in general Art Adventure helped me gain confidence and showed me I had more talents than I thought. Plus it taught me not to judge a

Don't judge by its cover because you
never really know what is behind that
cover.

By
Matthew ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~