

Miami County Juvenile Court 2013 Annual Report



**Miami County
Juvenile Court**

Welcome to Miami County Juvenile Court

The Juvenile Court of Miami County is a division of the Miami County Common Pleas Court. Its purpose is to counsel and rehabilitate youth who commit crimes; protect the Miami County community from juvenile crime; assist the victims of juvenile crime; protect children from abuse, neglect and dependency; and provide allocation of parental rights for children whose parents were never married. Under the direction of Judge W. McGregor Dixon, Jr., the court provides a broad range of community based programs. This summary is intended to help the community understand the services the Court provided in 2013.



Judge W. McGregor Dixon, Jr.

Special points of interest:

- ◆ *Piqua Probation Office*
- ◆ *PREP*
- ◆ *Website*
- ◆ *Reducing Detention Stays*
- ◆ *Statistical Summary*



Piqua Probation Office Finds a New Home

In September the Probation Department relocated its Piqua Office to 110 S. Wayne Street. After receiving notice that our lease was ending, we began searching for a new office. "Having a presence in Piqua has always been important because we serve a lot of families from this area," said Chief Probation Officer Julie Harmon. "We wanted to stay accessible to downtown so that transportation would not be an issue for the kids," said Stephanie Hen-

ning, Probation Officer. "This is a much bigger space and has given us the opportunity to add treatment and education groups that benefit the kids," she added.

The Piqua Office is used nearly every day by the Juvenile Probation Department. In addition to private office space for each Probation Officer, there is ample space to conduct treatment groups and an on-site parking lot.



Piqua Probation Office

Preparing Kids for the Future

Probation Officers Stephanie Henning and Elizabeth Yingst took advantage of an opportunity provided by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), coordinated in this region by Planned Parenthood of South West Ohio, to become certified trainers for the PREP (Personal Responsibility Education Program) and implemented the program for youth on probation.

PREP prepares youth aged 14 years and older who are involved with the juvenile justice and foster care systems for the transition to adulthood. Stephanie and Elizabeth have been offering the program in Piqua for over a year. To date they have provided the series of nine sessions three times, and over 25 youth have been through the program. The sessions offer practical help with such issues as healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention, financial literacy,



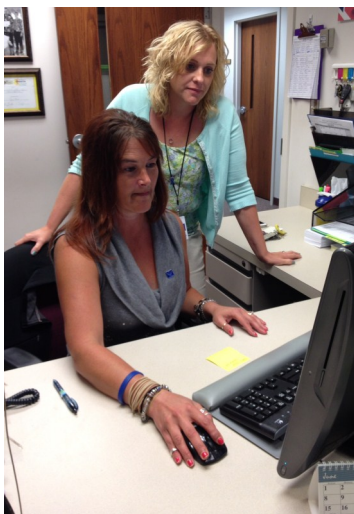
Youth completing group get a certificate and gift card to Walmart

and preparation for the workforce. Feedback from the youth has been very positive.

“The information taught through PREP is most important to the demographic of youth we serve because they are at highest risk. Our probationers struggle in their homes, in the community and at school. They are looking for someone to love them and often are

not prepared for what long term effects can come from those relationships”, says Probation Officer Henning. “Having the group meet weekly allowed us to make contact with probationers on a regular basis. It enhanced our rapport and communication with the youth,” said P.O. Yingst. “All the kids seem to get something out of the program, and it gives us another way to reach out to the kids,” she added.

Website Redesign



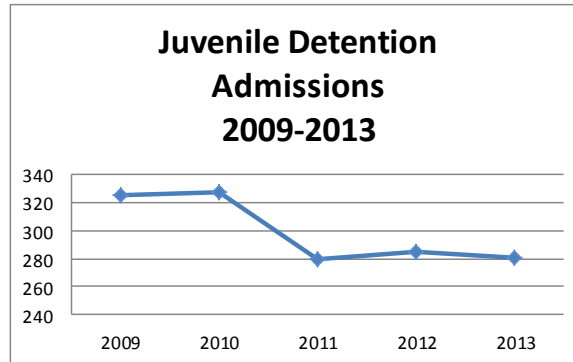
Nicole Rodriguez and Terra Homan

In the summer of 2013, Miami County entered into a contract with CivicPlus to redesign the county website to better connect and engage the community. The new website allows for more interaction with citizens. For example, individuals can sign up to receive alerts and notices from various county departments. Juvenile Court took advantage of the opportunity to update its website. Nicole Rodriguez (Chief Deputy Clerk) and Terra Homan (Fiscal Officer) worked with the County IT department and CivicPlus to learn how to manage and update the website content.

“Our goal was to make the new site user-friendly while providing valuable information to those who visit our court,” said Homan. Rodriguez added, “It was a learning process from the start and forced us to step back and take a good hard look at the information we should be providing to the public.” Rodriguez further noted that, “The beauty of this new site is that it allows the court to control the content and make changes as they become necessary, rather than passing it off to a third-party vendor. Not only does the information get to the public in a timely fashion, but it is a cost-savings measure.”

Reducing Detention Stays

Over the last three years, the Probation Department has made efforts to reduce the number of youth in detention. Researchers have consistently found that the overuse of secure confinement does not deter future offending but in fact increases the likelihood of further involvement in the juvenile and adult justice system. The statistics prompted the juvenile probation department to implement policies which consider alternatives to detention. “The intent is not to eliminate detention but to use it as it was intended,” said Julie Harmon, Chief Probation Officer. “Secure confinement is meant to protect the community from further offending and to assure that a youth appears for trial.



So we have to constantly ask ourselves, is there another way?” stated Harmon.

“It takes a lot of community education to help people understand that sometimes using secure confinement can just add to the trauma and not help a kid make behavioral changes. We hear they have to be held accountable and punished for their actions, but research has shown that these kind of external controls are not lasting and kids don’t change their behavior,” said Harmon. Most of the kids involved with the Court have long standing mental health and drug

abuse problems; detention is not a real world environment and doesn’t focus on teaching the transferable skills necessary for community success.

The Probation Department uses a standardized risk assessment tool to help determine which kids need to be confined. “We have had some success in using electronic home monitoring units. It keeps kids at home, and they can still participate in school, treatment and be a part of the community,” said Chief Probation Officer Harmon.

Involving Kids in Foster Care to Plan for Their Future

National child welfare organizations, as well as juvenile courts throughout the country, are beginning to recognize the benefits that attending court hearings can have for youth who are preparing to transition out of the foster care system. Research has shown that involving youth in the decision-making process, and thereby empowering them, is the most important way to make a difference in their outcomes. For this reason, Magistrate Rebecca Hall invites and expects age-appropriate foster-care

youth to attend all annual review hearings.

“Attending court hearings benefits both the kids and the court. Youth get the opportunity to understand the process, direct their questions and needs directly to me, and gain a level of investment and control over their lives. I, in turn, learn more about them and can make better decisions than just relying on second-hand reports,” said Magistrate Hall. “I always ask the kids what they want but then explain that my job is to determine what is in their best interests. Hopefully these are the

same things. If not, at least they feel that they’ve been heard and have a better understanding of why a particular decision was made.” Many youth report being nervous prior to their first court hearing but later state that they enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to have input into their future.

Miami County Juvenile Court

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Please visit our website:
www.co.miami.oh.us

For a copy of the entire annual
report call 440-5990

2013 Statistical Summary

| Cases Filed/Transferred In | 2013 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Delinquent | 845 |
| Traffic | 478 |
| Dependency/Neglect/Abuse | 41 |
| Unruly | 298 |
| Adult | 100 |
| Permanent Custody | 0 |
| Custody/Change of Custody/Visitation | 675 |
| Support Enforcement/Modifications | 1886 |
| Parentage | 36 |
| UIFSA | 30 |
| Other | 10 |
| Transferred/Reactivated | |
| Total Cases Filed | 4399 |

| Types of Dispositions | 2013 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Bind over to adult court | 3 |
| Commitment to DYS | 1 |
| Detention | 281 |
| David L. Brown | 10 |
| West Central Day Treatment | 11 |
| West Central Rehabilitation Center | 9 |
| Other CCF | 0 |
| Suspended Commitment to DYS | 26 |
| Community Service | 315 |
| Probation | 109 |
| Electronic Home Monitoring | 57 |
| House Arrest | 264 |
| Temporary Custody CSB | 17 |
| Protective Supervision CSB | 35 |
| Permanent Custody CSB | 7 |
| Jail Sentence (Adult) | 59 |
| Restitution | 91 |
| Cases with Fines Assessed | 471 |
| Cases with Costs Assessed | 624 |
| Waiver due to Indigence | 601 |
| Fines and Court costs | \$ 140,088.69 |