

CITIZENS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

On-line Update

June 2002

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

THANK YOU!

We wish to express our special thanks and appreciation to:

- ✓ **The Juvenile Justice Center** at Suffolk University Law School for sponsoring our **Breakfast Meeting** on “Mental Health Issues in the Juvenile Justice System” on April 24, 2002.
- ✓ **Thomas Grisso, Ph.D., Richard Barnum, M.D., and Robert Kinscherff, Ph.D., Esq.** for presenting their important work at our April Breakfast Meeting (*see below for a review*).
- ✓ **Wes Robertson** from **YouthBuild Boston** for giving us his valuable time to help us create a more efficient mailing system.
- ✓ **Joey Montero** at the **Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corp** for working beyond the call of duty to help us recover data from a computer that died on us in May.

CfJJ HIGHLIGHTS

CONGRATULATIONS LAEL!:

On May 15th, Lael Chester (CfJJ’s Executive Director) gave birth to a baby boy. Caleb McAlpine Chapman Chester was born 8lbs and 7ozs.

RECOGNIZED ACHIEVEMENTS:

On Wednesday, April 24th, The Jewish Women’s Archive & Hadassah Boston honored **Rebecca Young** at its “Women Who Dared” Program. Rebecca was CfJJ’s first Executive Director (1994 – 1998) and is presently a Prisoner’s Rights Attorney with the **Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services**.

Rebecca was honored for her work designing and implementing a program to prevent guard-on-inmate violence in the Massachusetts state prisons. Congratulations, Rebecca!

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The CfJJ **Fundraising Campaign** for the FY02 is currently underway. This year an anonymous donor has agreed to give \$10,000 if we reach our goal of raising \$10,000 by **June 30, 2002**. The deadline is approaching quickly!

To make an important contribution to help improve our juvenile justice system, we hope you will consider submitting a donation to **Citizens For Juvenile Justice** at 101 Tremont Street, Suite 705, Boston, MA 02108.

WELCOMING SUMMER INTERNS

CfJJ welcomes our two summer interns, **Sarah Montigny** and **Roshni Parikh**. Sarah will be a senior this fall at Clark University majoring in sociology. Roshni will be enrolling as a junior at

Northwestern University majoring in social policy. We look forward to the strengths and energies they contribute to our research and public information work this summer.

CfJJ's BREAKFAST MEETING ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:

On April 24th, 2002, CfJJ hosted a Breakfast Meeting on **Mental Health Issues in the Juvenile Justice System: Examining the Scope of the Problem in Massachusetts and the Nation.**

Our distinguished speakers included Thomas Grisso, Ph.D., Richard Barnum, M.D., and Robert Kinscherff, Ph.D., Esq.

The panelists discussed the prevalence of mental health issues in the juvenile justice system, the recent development of diagnostic tools for committed youth, and the wider access to care that has been made available to them.

Dr. Barnum provided a historical background on mental health issues in the juvenile justice system. Beginning with William Healey and Augusta Bronner's establishment of the **Boston Juvenile Court Clinic** in the 1910's, Dr. Barnum noted that problems with implementation of their program prevented the realization of their vision of a therapeutic model to treat juvenile offenders.

In the last few years, public fear of youth violence has given way to a system that increasingly treats youth as adults. The increased stakes for juveniles has added a sense of urgency to the need to improve diagnostic specificity and treatment efficacy in mental health.

In Massachusetts, broader Medicaid coverage to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds now includes mental health coverage and wider access to care.

Nationally, mental health/juvenile justice advocacy initiatives are supporting broad and early access to preventative care, early screening and assessment for those in the legal system, and the use of

mental health assessment as a defense approach.

Dr. Grisso discussed his findings from several years of administering the Massachusetts **Screening Instrument, Second Version** (MAYSI-2), a questionnaire and screening tool that is widely used by the Massachusetts **Department of Youth Services** (DYS) as well as 44 other states and has helped to elucidate the nature of mental health issues among juveniles

Each of our panelists played an important role in developing the MAYSI. With the support and encouragement of Dr. Grisso, Dr. Barnum—who is also on CfJJ's Board of Directors—wrote the original proposal to develop the MAYSI questionnaire. The original questionnaire items were the result of collaboration among Dr. Grisso, Dr. Barnum, Dr. Kinscherff, and Richard Famularo.

. According to Dr. Grisso, the MAYSI results have provided evidence that between *forty and sixty percent* of youths in detention centers meet the criteria for some psychological disorder. The situation with girls is particularly alarming and confounding as they consistently rate highest on all psychological disorders, including anger and suicide ideation.

Dr. Grisso presented a caveat on the validity of this finding about girls, hypothesizing that the results might have been skewed by the general tendency for girls to verbally express psychological symptoms more readily than boys. This issue—as well as the problems of defining mental illness and identifying which treatments should be provided—are among the areas that Dr. Grisso will be exploring further.

Dr. Kinscherff discussed implementation issues and presented plans to improve mental health services in Massachusetts' juvenile justice system. He expressed the need for all human service agencies to create partnerships that

support a continuum of care for youth, rather than placing the responsibility solely in the hands of the **Department of Social Services (DSS)** and **DYS**.

For example, Probation and **DYS** might collaborate when a youth has a substance abuse issue, and the **Department of Public Health (DPH)** could help find substance abuse services for the child in the Commonwealth. This would also mean providing financial support for special services that take place outside the system if necessary.

Resources

- Grisso, Thomas (1998) **Forensic Evaluation of Juveniles**. Professional Resource Exchange (see review below).
- Grisso, Thomas, & Robert G. Schwartrz (2000) **Youth on Trial: A Developmental Perspective on Juvenile Justice**. University of Chicago Press (see review below).
- Teplin, L. (1998). **DSM-III-R Affective Disorders**. Chicago Juvenile Detention Center. Children's Court Centennial Communications Project (July 1999). **Second Chances: Giving Kids a Chance to Make a Better Choice**. The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice: www.cjcyj.org/centennial.

IN THE NEWS

NAPOLEON BEAZLEY EXECUTED

On May 28th, Napoleon Beazley was executed after an appeal for a stay of execution was denied. Beazley was convicted for a felony murder he committed when he was 17 years old. In his final statement, Beazley underscored the need for a system in which rehabilitation is a genuine option. To read the rest of Beazley's statement, visit: www.ccadp.org/napoleonbeazley.htm

CHRISTOPHER SIMMONS' EXECUTION POSTPONED

Prior to Napoleon Beazley's execution, the Missouri Supreme Court issued a stay of execution for Christopher Simmons, aged 25, who was sentenced to death in 1994 for a murder committed when he was 17 years old.

The stay was issued pending the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Atkins v. Virginia*, which may undermine the Court's 1989 decision allowing child offenders to be put to death. The same arguments were used in Beazley's appeal but was denied.

In addition, **international law** prohibits the execution of people who were under 18 at the time of the crime.

FLORES AT OJJDP

On April 12, 2002, the US Senate instated Robert Flores as the **new Administrator of the OJJDP**. As Administrator, Mr. Flores will be responsible for addressing public safety issues of juvenile crime and youth victimization at the national level.

Prior to his OJJDP appointment, Mr. Flores was the Vice President and **Senior Counsel for the National Law Center for Children and Families**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NCJFCJ CONFERENCE

The **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)** is hosting its **65th Annual Conference** in **Boston** from **July 14-17**. A variety of juvenile justice topics will be discussed, including delinquency, dependency, divorce and domestic violence. The conference is open to the public. For more information on this and other conferences go to: <http://training.ncjfcj.unr.edu/conferences.htm>

ON THE NET

WEB SITES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Building Blocks for Youth has assembled information and a brief fact sheet on mental health and juvenile justice which can be found at:

www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/mentalhealth/factsheet.html.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's April 2000 issue of Juvenile Justice features a variety of interesting articles concerning juvenile justice and mental health. Some of the topics discussed include issues and emerging responses and Milwaukee's wrap-around services which aid youth with mental health needs and suicide prevention in juvenile facilities. The issue can be found at: http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjinl_2000_4/contents.html

MORE INFO ON JJ AND MENTAL HEALTH:

For more information on juvenile justice and mental health, visit the **National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice** at www.ncmhjj.com or **The National Mental Health Association** at www.nmha.org.

IN PRINT

BOOKS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

Grisso, Thomas (1998) **Forensic Evaluation of Juveniles**. Professional Resource Exchange.

Summary: As a comprehensive guide for mental health professionals conducting evaluations in court-related delinquency cases, this book provides: instruction on how to prepare evaluations; detailed explanations of the common terminology used in delinquency related matters; and

explanations of how to provide for a professional and ethical practice.

Grisso, Thomas, & Robert G. Schwartz (2000) **Youth on Trial: A Developmental Perspective on Juvenile Justice**. University of Chicago Press.

Summary: Grisso and Schwartz advocate for a juvenile justice system that focuses more upon the psychological development of juveniles and less on prosecution. This important book, which was part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Mental Health and Development, presents research that seriously challenges our policy of trying youths as adults by focusing on whether youths can adequately participate in their own defense and whether they are equally as culpable as adults for the crimes they commit] CfJJ Board Member Dr. Richard Barnum was a contributing author on the chapter entitled "Clinical and Forensic Evaluation of Competence to Stand Trial in Juvenile Defendants."

Hodge, Robert D., & D.A. Andrews (1997) **Assessing the Youthful Offender: Issues and Techniques** (Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology Library). Plenum Publishing Corporation.

Summary: Explains the usefulness and limitations of psychological assessments in the prosecution of youthful offenders. The author argues that valid assessments can improve the system by improving the quality of the information used.

Emotional & Behavioral Disorders In Youth. (2001) Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health and Civic Research Institute.

Summary: This new report compiles the latest research and reports, as well as ideas and suggestions on how to effectively deal with troubled children. Multiple issues involving children with mental disabilities are discussed

and recommendations are made on how to identify and assess at risk youth.

Coalition For Juvenile Justice Annual Report (2000) **Handle With Care: Serving The Mental Health Needs Of Young Offenders.** Washington, DC.

Summary: A comprehensive report summarizing the findings from a year-long investigation on mental health and the juvenile justice system. This report discusses the difficulties children with mental health issues encounter within the juvenile justice system. Recommendations are made identifying the actions the President, Congress, State Advisory Groups, Juvenile Justice Facilities, Families, Youth, Communities, as well as other institutions can take to ensure that youth suffering from mental illness in our juvenile justice system are successfully treated.

Citizens for Juvenile Justice is located at 101 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108. For more information, contact us at (617) 338-1050 or cfjj@ciff.org. You may also visit our website at www.cfjj.org.