

Juvenile Detention and Alternative Programs Best Practices Award Official Entry Form

Attach the form to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at www.pacounties.org. Please indicate if this is a secure detention or alternative program award entry.

Owner / Contracting County Central Counties Youth Center County Class Multiple
Address 148 Paradise Road City Bellefonte, Pa. Zip 16823
Contact Name James E Jones Jr. Title Administrator
Department _____ Phone (814) 355-0650
Fax (814) 355-0894 Email jejj22@comcast.net.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title Summer Language Arts Program Start Date June 1987 (approximately)

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:

Chair of the Board of County Commissioners

Jeffrey A Snyder
Oversight Board (where applicable)

[Signature]
Facility Chief Executive Officer

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Attach a separate program narrative document to the form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. *Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.*

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below:

- A description of the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort
- A description of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county-wide planning strategies, etc.
- A description of expectations and measurable goals, including supporting data
- A brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned
- A brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project
- A description of how the activities described in a project started in the past were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources
- A description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any, and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please attach any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant's description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data.

Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type. Entries must be received by close of business on February 12, 2016. Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 13 - 15, 2016.

More information: Brinda Carroll Penyak, bpenyak@pacounties.org

Summer Language Arts Program
Central Counties Youth Center
Submitted by: James E. Jones Jr., Administrator

Kids who are detained within the detention centers across Pennsylvania have a wide variety of problems and concerns that need to be addressed. At the Central Counties Youth Center, we have found that a very important problem that too many of our kids have is that they are lacking in their education. Too many of our kids are failing school or are lagging in their abilities. The direct result of this is kids "hating" school, dropping out of school or being placed in our Center for a Probation Violation for not attending school. It is because of this that we place a high emphasis on the Educational Program at the Center. The education of the kids during the school year (September through the beginning of June) is provided by the local Intermediate Unit (CIU) and works with the kids in all the basic subjects and touches on life skill development. This is great, but JDCAP and other organizations throughout the United States see a need for year around education for our kids. Because of this, the Center has established a Summer Language Arts Program that is provided to help the kids improve their reading skills, reading comprehension and vocabulary. The additional schooling is very productive and has allowed the kids at the Central Counties Youth Center to improve their educational skills, especially reading and reading comprehension. It is because of this that I nominate our Summer Language Arts Program as the Juvenile Detention and Alternative Programs Best Practice Award.

It is common knowledge that a lot of the kids we get in at juvenile detention centers throughout Pennsylvania are lacking in their educational skills. At the Central Counties Youth Center, we test each new resident when they come into our Educational Classroom on their reading and math skills. Over time, we have found that on average, our kids are scoring 3 to 4 years below average in these subjects and struggling to keep up in a school setting. The struggles which the kids have in reading is troublesome and is setting them up for failure as a youth in school and as an adult looking to get ahead in the work force. It was after seeing these struggles and how it affects kids in the long run that the Central Counties Youth Center created this Program to help the kids with their reading and ultimately, with the rest of their lives.

The education of the kids at the Central Counties Youth Center over the summers has been ongoing since the 1980's. It is funded through Title One Program which provides Federal money to expand on the basic education of youth in schools and other facilities that provide education for children. The Center's funding is determined by the number of kids who are detained during a certain time frame each year. Most years, the funding is more than enough to pay for the Program, but on the few occasions that it has not been sufficient, the Board of Directors of the Center has provided money through the budget process to ensure that the Program continues. This funding is used to pay for the teachers who are contracted with each summer and for the supplies and books that are needed.

The Summer Language Arts Program is a ten (10) week program that starts a week after the CIU has completed their school year until late August. We have been fortunate over the years to have teachers who are dedicated to helping the kids and have enjoyed their time during the summer and have had very little turnover. This provides for continuity in the Program and a comfort level with the staff in the abilities of the teachers in not only the education of the kids, but in the security that is needed within our secure facility. We have class from 9:00 a.m. until noon each day during this period of time with short breaks to allow the kids to relax and refocus. During the afternoons, when class has ended, we will usually have a 30 minute Silent Reading Period where the kids can either catch up on the novel that they are currently working on in class, or read another book or magazine from our library.

Over the years, the content of the Program has evolved, but the basic premise remains the same. The teachers select 5 or 6 novels each year that they will work with the kids on. During class, the novel will be read in a variety of ways. There is silent reading, small group reading with discussion, the teacher reading to the classroom and the students reading to the group. This allows for a variety of learning opportunities and it is remarkable when you witness kids helping each other when someone is having a hard time reading the novel. In addition to the reading aspect of the Program, there is also the comprehension of the materials. In order to measure how much the kids comprehend what they are reading, the teachers will give them work assignments about the novel. This could be in the form of a short essay, a crossword puzzle, a multiple choice test or a verbal discussion about the content that day. In addition, the educational staff will have the kids complete projects about the novel. We have had bridges build of popsicle sticks, mobiles made, flowers planted, wall paintings and sketch drawings. In addition, we have

had community members and staff with expertise in the subject of the novel come to the Center and talk to the kids about their knowledge or their experiences. All make for an enjoyable and educational experience for the kids.

While there are no statistical indicators that our kids are improving in their reading skills since we do not have them complete a pre and post-test, we know that we are increasing their interest each year in reading. First, during an annual inspection by the Department of Public Welfare (now being completed by the Bureau of Human Service Licensing) I was conducting a tour of the facility for them. When we went into the Program Area that afternoon, all of the kids were sitting on the couches reading. They remarked to me how unusual it was to see this. I told them that this was our Silent Reading Period so it was expected. About 15 minutes later, we were walking back through this area and there were 8 of the 10 kids we had at the Center that day still reading. I informed the D.P.W. representatives that this sight was what was remarkable. The Silent Reading Period had ended and the kids were free to watch television, play a game or go into the gym. The fact that 80% of the kids chose to keep reading was great to see. The second way I know that we are impacting the kids with their reading is the use of a book worm periodically over the summer. During the summers in which a book worm is done, we had the kids make a circle out of construction paper and put their name and the title of the book they finished on it. We then hang it on the wall making a worm out of all the circles. At the end of most summers, we will have approximately 50 kids who will participate in the Language Arts Program and between them, there will be close to 300 books read and our book worm will lap the walls of our classroom. It must be remembered that our kids are only in detention for an average of 14 days so this was quite an accomplishment.

Reading is something we take seriously at the Center and we encourage the kids to read year around. We have a fairly extensive Library in which we try to keep stocked with recent books that the kids want to read. We ask them every month or so what books that we do not have that they might read and will purchase as many as we can utilizing our Title One Funding and our general budget. We subscribe to various magazines which the kids will like and have them on display to read at any time. During the weekends and non-school days during the regular school year, we will have Silent Reading Periods for the kids to encourage reading. In the evenings, lights are kept on in their rooms when they go to bed to allow them to read.

The Summer Language Arts Program at the Central Counties Youth Center works year to year with our kids to improve their educational abilities and inspire them to read and ultimately dream of what they can be. This Program has been going on for close to 30 years and even if Title One Funds would "dry up", the Board of Directors at the Center understand the importance of providing our kids with the opportunity to improve their educational experiences and would financially support the continuation of the Program. It is through the dedication of the teachers, the staff and the Board of Directors that this Program is a success and will continue for years to come. We are helping the kids and the Counties that we serve and it is because of this hard work and dedication that I nominate the Central Counties Youth Center's Summer Language Arts Program for the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania Best Practices Award for Juvenile Detention and Alternatives Program.