



WHAT'S WORKING

A Message From DJJ Director Andy Block

Feb. 4, 2016

One Year Later: Much To Be Proud Of

Thanks To Your Dedication, We Are Making The Transformation A Success

As we start a new year, I thought it might be helpful to share with you some of our collective and very positive accomplishments of the last year. We are truly moving in the right direction and toward a juvenile justice system that uses data, research, and evidence to help the youth, families, and communities we serve. As you read about some of our more noteworthy milestones below, I hope that you also note how none of what we have done could have been possible without the help of everyone –in the community; in the facilities; in HR, Procurement, IT, and Training; in Central Office; and in the field. This has truly been, and will continue to be, a team effort. Thank you!!

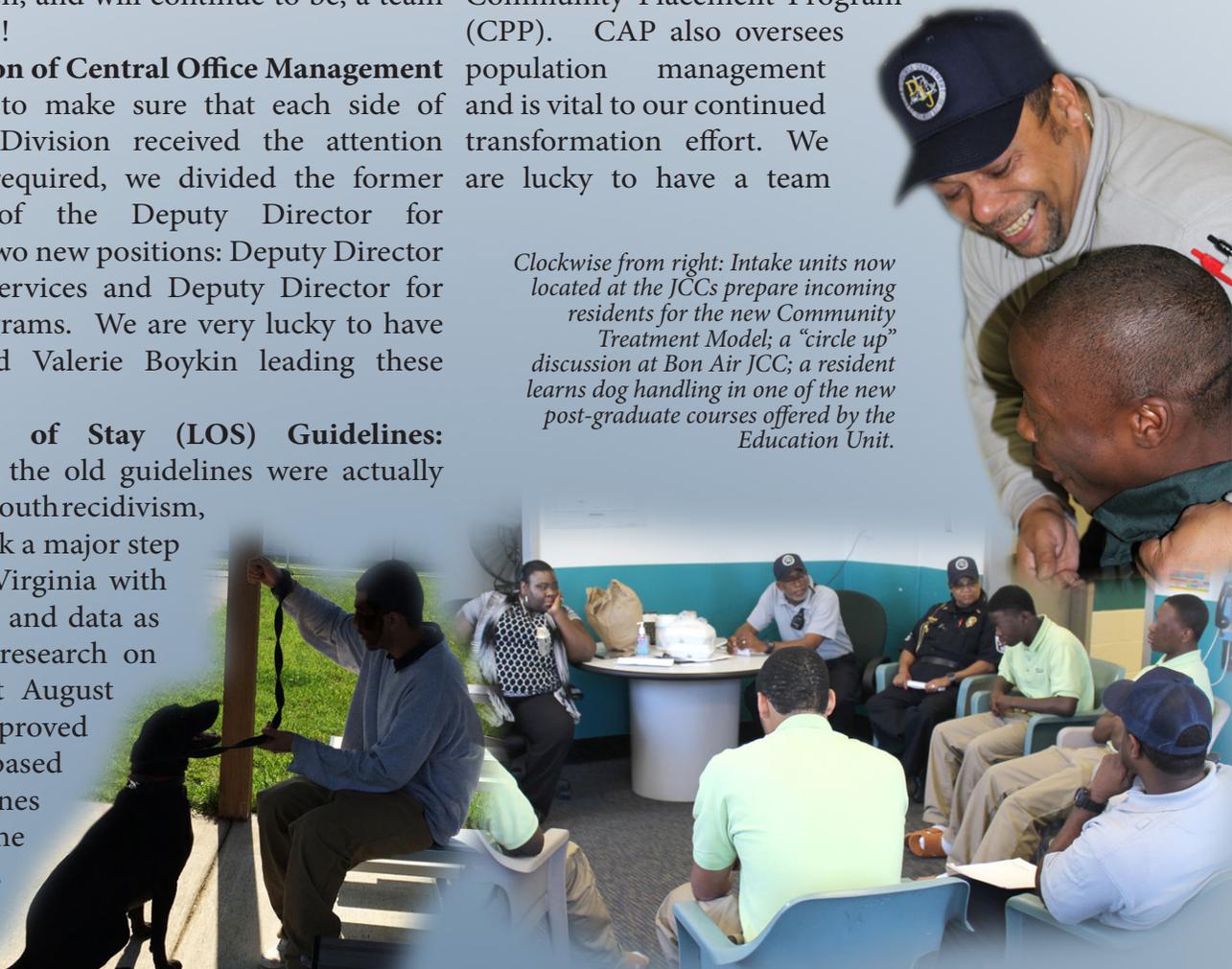
Reorganization of Central Office Management Team: In order to make sure that each side of the Operations Division received the attention and support it required, we divided the former responsibilities of the Deputy Director for Operations into two new positions: Deputy Director for Residential Services and Deputy Director for Community Programs. We are very lucky to have Jack Ledden and Valerie Boykin leading these respective units.

New Length of Stay (LOS) Guidelines: Recognizing that the old guidelines were actually resulting in more youth recidivism, the DJJ Board took a major step toward aligning Virginia with our own research and data as well as national research on what works. Last August the DJJ Board approved new research-based LOS guidelines that shortened the projected LOSs,

balancing the risk for re-arrest and offense severity. We have tailored our guidelines to better fit what we now know is the best way to serve the youth in our care.

Closure of RDC and Creation of Central Admission and Placement (CAP) Unit: In June of last year we closed the Reception and Diagnostic Center and established the CAP unit to manage and maintain the integrity of the commitment packet process and evaluation of residents as they enter one of the intake units now located at Bon Air JCC or Beaumont JCC or move directly to a Community Placement Program (CPP). CAP also oversees population management and is vital to our continued transformation effort. We are lucky to have a team

Clockwise from right: Intake units now located at the JCCs prepare incoming residents for the new Community Treatment Model; a "circle up" discussion at Bon Air JCC; a resident learns dog handling in one of the new post-graduate courses offered by the Education Unit.

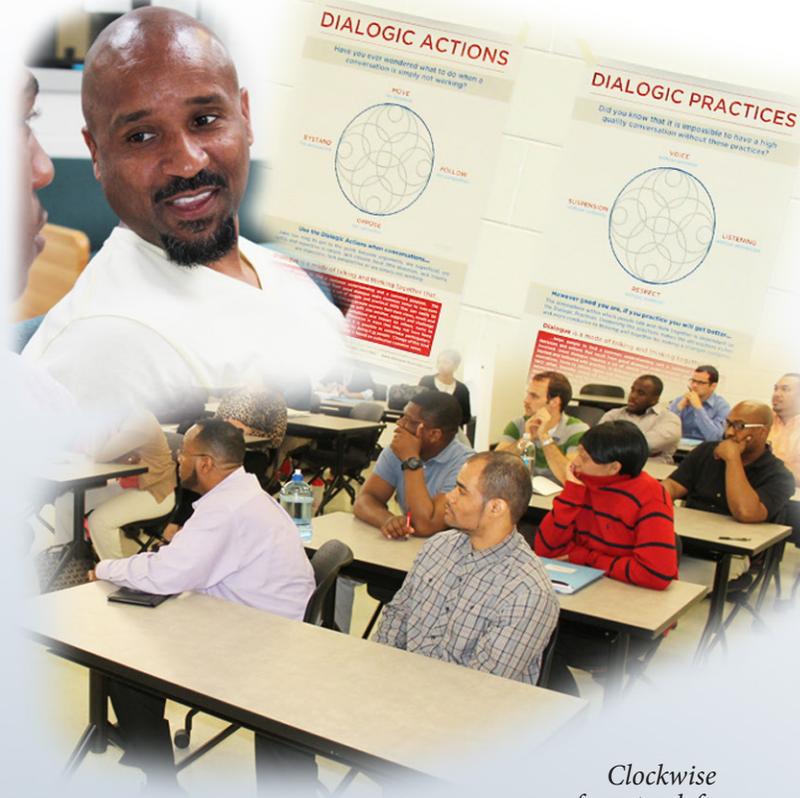


under the direction of Administrative Program Manager Andrea McMahon that is working hard, embracing their new roles, and rising to the challenge.

Implementation of the Community Treatment Model: On January 20th of last year we announced the implementation of the Community Treatment Model, which we created to improve services and safety in the facilities and reduce recidivism after release. It is focused on developing a consistent, rehabilitative community within each living unit in the JCCs. By training an interdisciplinary cohort of staff and placing them in a unit with a consistent group of youth, this model results in more rigorous rehabilitation and engagement throughout the day and better working conditions for our staff. The staff receive more training, have a consistent group of youth with whom they work, and a consistent team of colleagues of which they are a member. As they convert to their new units, their work shifts are decreased from 12 hours to 8 hours per day. The conversion to the Community Treatment Model has required creation of new positions, reclassification of hundreds of others, and significant HR training, recruitment, and hiring. This has also been made possible through the Annie E. Casey Foundation's financial support for trainers from the Missouri Youth Services Institute to both train and coach each new team that will lead a converted unit.

I am pleased to report that we now have seven units using the Community Treatment Model, with 10 more units expected by the end of this year. The leadership teams in each facility, as well as the staff in each new unit, deserve huge credit and thanks for all they have done to lead and support the conversion.

Expansion of the CPPs: CPPs are highly structured, disciplined residential programs in locally-operated secure juvenile detention centers



Clockwise from top left: Asst. Superintendent Aaron Knight of the Virginia Beach Detention Center participates in the Community Placement Program; charts used in Dialogue Training; the first-ever class of Resident Specialist Trainees.

(JDCs) for committed youth. The goal of the CPPs is to place residents closer to their home communities to facilitate an easier transition after release and to receive services and programming in a smaller secure setting. CPPs focus on addressing specific treatment needs and risk factors and developing competency in the areas of education, job readiness, life, and social skills. Six JDCs are participating in the program so far: Blue Ridge, Chesapeake, Rappahannock, Merrimac, Shenandoah, and Virginia Beach.

Offering of Post-Graduate Courses: As recently as the spring of 2014, DJJ had very few programs to offer students who received their diplomas or GEDs either prior to or during commitment. Thanks to the leadership of Deputy Director of Education Lisa Floyd and her team, we have dramatically expanded the opportunities available to our residents to gain job certification in a range of fields and to take college-level classes. We also know that we need to do more than we are now and are continuing to expand such offerings. So far, residents have earned 120 certificates of training and 20 national industry certifications.

Reentry Reform: We learned this fall that Virginia was only one of three states in the country to receive a \$725,000 grant from the U.S. Office



The Central Admission and Placement (CAP) unit.



of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to support DJJ's effort to improve public safety by strengthening and reforming the reentry system. Thanks in large part to the efforts of Reentry Program Manager Ashaki McNeil, the grant funds will support the development of new, uniform reentry procedures, training, and technical assistance for DJJ staff; efforts to promote greater family engagement, including transportation to the JCCs; more VisuVisit technology; and more effective and meaningful partnerships with other child-serving state and local agencies to promote greater connection for residents to work, education, treatment, and other supportive services upon release.

Dialogue Training for DJJ Leadership Team: Whether it is between the community and our facilities, Central Office and the field, or education and operations within the facility, effective communication has been an ongoing challenge for DJJ. While effective and thorough communication is critical to the successful functioning of any agency, it is even more important during times of great change and transition. Accordingly, through the support of a range of grants, we have retained Dialogue Associates to work with a wide range of DJJ staff, to help us find a common understanding and a common purpose as we work on the transformation together, and to provide us with the communication skills and tools necessary to work well together. This is an ongoing effort that has included leadership from many different divisions of the agency and will hopefully continue to reach more and more of our team.

I know that I have left off many other different milestones and accomplishments such as successfully passing our PREA audits, the presentation of a quilt to the Governor, the reinvigoration of our Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, and the conversion to the Cardinal accounting system; but I hope you all can take great pride in our collective accomplishments and in what we have detailed above. Thank you all, and so much, for all that you do to support one another and those we serve. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Post-Graduate Course Achievement:

Certificates of Training: 120

National Industry Certifications: 20

From top: CompTIA A+ Certification; Educational Improv; National ServSafe Certification culinary training; residents study scripts in Educational Improv class; Introduction to Business class.