

Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth

To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve... Through Communication...

Adjudicated Youth Involved in MiConnections

Ten students who are adjudicated youth with disabilities are enrolled in the MiConnections Project. These students reside at the Wolverine Secure Treatment facility (<http://wolverinehs.org/whs/WSTC.htm>) in Saginaw, Michigan. Wolverine Secure Treatment is a private, maximum-security facility, which houses 80 adjudicated youths and is part of Wolverine Human Services.

MiConnections events held on facility grounds include the “Reality Store,” “Kaleidoscope,” (www.myklc.com) and speakers from GM Research & Proving Center in Milford as well as Gray Iron foundry in Saginaw, on Disability Mentoring Day last Fall.

Wolverine has a grant for a new life skills computer program, “Targeting Success,” that includes instruction in disclosure, interviewing, budgeting and other transition, reintegration skills that students need.

For more information, contact Wolverine Secure Treatment Facility; Dennis VanBeest vanbeest@wolverinshs.org or Terry Jacobs Jacobst@wolverinehs.org; phone: 989-776-0422 X347.

Nokomis Challenge Center: Living Restorative Justice

- Susan Kramer and Julie Eckhardt

For young people addicted to drugs and alcohol, reacting to impulses and the values of the gang may be the driving forces that have landed them in the juvenile justice system. The Nokomis Challenge Center, administered by the Michigan Department of Human Services, provides youths with the skills and knowledge to choose a different road. Many Nokomis graduates go on to complete high school, attend community college, or succeed in employment because of the major changes brought about through this challenging program.

Barry is a recent graduate of Nokomis and is now successfully employed. With a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and placed in Emotionally Impaired special education programs, he didn't have much success in public school. Barry arrived at Nokomis with a destructive belief: “Nobody's gonna make me quit smokin' pot.” At 17 years old, various community placements and programs had already ended in failure for Barry. After assaulting another youth in a previous facility, Nokomis was his last stop. Since graduating from the Nokomis' six-month program, he now works at a major grocery chain and has a completely different attitude. Like other Nokomis graduates, he now knows he can choose positive behavior, take initiative and get along with people.

The Nokomis Challenge Center has an addiction treatment program for chronic substance abusers and a general offender program. Both programs have two levels of security, with six-month and twelve-month minimum stays. The programs offer either a five-day wilderness experience per month or high-impact day wilderness experiences. Along with academic programs for high school credit or G.E.D., the Nokomis Center implements individualized therapy, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and treatment groups, within campus-wide balanced and restorative justice programming.

On the wilderness trips, youths learn to take initiative, make better decisions and to lead others. Through these intensive outdoor experiences, participants learn that they can derail negative behavior patterns and choose effective problem solving strategies. The intensity of outdoor challenges and group building creates a powerful treatment modality. The trips offer youths an opportunity to practice their skills in a challenging environment and get daily feedback from others. Most the youths who attend the program have not had a foundation of positive experiences on which to build a better vision for their future. For some youths, the wilderness experience at Nokomis is their

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Working Together for Adjudicated Youth

The **Adjudicated Youth Project** is an interagency initiative between the Department of Human Services-Bureau of Juvenile Justice (BJJ) and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth-Rehabilitation Services (MRS). Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services (MPAS) is the key advocate for systems change that benefits adjudicated youth and they play an important role in the project. The project's goal is to assist adjudicated youth with disabilities to make a seamless transition from Bureau of Juvenile Justice training schools to productive roles in their respective communities. The project has the following three outcomes identified:

- Assist adjudicated youth with disabilities to prepare for exiting juvenile justice facilities
- Develop and implement a seamless system to assist youth with disabilities to successfully re-enter communities
- Assure coordinated education, rehabilitation and other services are available to youth exiting juvenile justice facilities.

Several years of systems analysis, planning, and cross training between BJJ, MRS and MPAS occurred in order to implement the initiative. The project was operationalized in FY 2005.

Accomplishments of the Project

By working together, the BJJ and MRS initiated the following systems change activities:

- Implemented a referral process to MRS for potentially eligible, adjudicated youth exiting state facilities
- Assigned specific MRS counselors to serve as liaisons to each state-run BJJ facility
- Developed a "cash match agreement" to partially fund a "blended" staff employee at Maxey Training School in order to coordinate services between Maxey and MRS

MRS & Adjudicated Youth

- √ The total number of Adjudicated Youth served by MRS in 2006 was 240.
- √ Average cost for these cases that result in employment is \$4,420.
- √ MRS is a member of the Department of Community Health's Juvenile Justice committee that identifies and addresses services for adjudicated youths with mental illness.

- Implemented a State Disability Assistance policy change
- Oriented new staff in respective organizations about the MRS/BJJ relationship
- Initiated discussions with Probate Court judges.

Michigan Data and Findings

Over 200 adjudicated youth with disabilities are served by Michigan Rehabilitation Services each year. Because of the seamless system, the average length of time between application and eligibility in these cases is shorter than the average length in most cases. The average case cost is higher. About 30% of the adjudicated youth served by MRS are coded as having learning disabilities.

Work To Do

Involvement with Community Mental Health organizations and local education agencies is the current focus for the partners serving adjudicated youth with disabilities. The Bureau of Juvenile Justice, Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Michigan Protection and Advocacy continue to inform staff about the interagency seamless system. The next annual staff training is planned for June, 2007. Look for interagency announcements about "Exit Planning Upon Entry: Accessing Reintegration Services."

Contact MRS Division Director Sandra Peck, or Consultant Lynn Boza for more information.

Stacy Hickox, Attorney for Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services, and Lynn Boza, Rehabilitation Consultant for Michigan Rehabilitation Services, will be presenting about this project at the Learning Disabilities Association International Conference on February 16, 2007 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The State Bar of Michigan Equal Access Initiative

The Equal Access Initiative is working to develop policies and programs to underserved population groups as well as groups who present with special needs or who face barriers to access. To learn more about this initiative and how to request accommodations see the following web site:

www.michbar.org/programs/equalaccess.cfm

first taste of success.

Balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) programming teaches that actions have consequences. The youths learn they have done considerable damage through their delinquent lifestyle. Making amends and repairing damage is an important part of the rehabilitation process. Nokomis youths assist in the community as a way of righting wrongs. They might help with a community meal, unload trucks for a food pantry or restore the environment. Even if they can't directly repair damages for which they are responsible, they can give back to another community and create positive outcomes. BARJ also focuses on trying to repair family relationships that have been harmed prior to the youth coming to Nokomis. Youths are supported while they take responsibility for behavior and begin to restore family relationships.

The goal for a youth like Barry is to graduate from Nokomis Challenge Center with reasonably stable behavior patterns. The Nokomis staff must feel confident that the young man can walk into another situation and respond in a socially responsible manner. Graduates have enough skills and knowledge to make positive choices when confronted with challenges. Many of the youths come in like Barry, acting rough and tough, but leave the program with the confidence that helps them respond differently to life's challenges.

To learn more about the Nokomis Challenge Center visit the web at: <http://www.michigan.gov/bjj>, click on Juvenile Justice on the left hand menu, then Facilities and scroll down to the Nokomis Center.

Please forward or print this bulletin for others.

E-mail your contributions or ideas for "Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth" to Lynn Boza:
bozal@michigan.gov or call 517/241-3957.

To subscribe, contact Lynn Boza as above.

Views expressed in Monday Bulletin articles are not necessarily the views of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth nor Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Addressing the Needs of Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System: The Current State of Knowledge

Authors: Daniel P. Mears, Laudan Y. Aron

Permanent Link: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=410885>

Overview

This report summarizes and assesses the state of knowledge about children and youth with disabilities who are at risk of delinquency and involvement in, or who have already entered, the juvenile justice system. By highlighting what is known about addressing delinquency and the diverse needs among this population, it aims to inform policy discussions among policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. The report's specific objectives are to examine:

- current laws and philosophical frameworks affecting children and youth with disabilities who are at risk of delinquency or are involved in the juvenile justice system;
- the relationship between disability, delinquency, and involvement in the juvenile justice system;
- the factors associated with disability and delinquency;
- current and anticipated delinquency and disability-related programming for children and youth with disabilities who may enter or are in the juvenile justice system;
- the effectiveness of prevention, intervention and treatment, and management strategies for reducing delinquency and addressing disability-related needs among this population of children and youth;
- barriers and facilitators to implementing effective strategies for helping these children and youth; and
- recommended "next steps" for increasing the scope and quality of knowledge and practice for reducing delinquency among and addressing the disability-related needs of at-risk children and youth with disabilities.

To achieve these objectives, the report provides a systematic, multidimensional review of existing research and includes insights provided by service providers, administrators, policymakers, advocates, and researchers. The report examines a range of interrelated issues to establish a broad-based foundation—a portrait of the "forest"—for understanding what is and is not known about children and youth with disabilities who are at risk of delinquency or juvenile justice involvement or who are already involved in the justice system.

For a summary of the report and links to the complete document see: <http://www.urban.org/publications/410885.html>

REFERENCE POINTS:

Police Response to People with Disabilities

The US Department of Justice has added additional content to their Video Gallery Section of the WWW.ADA.GOV web site. This new piece is an eight part series titled “*Police Response to People with Disabilities*” and is designed to be used in roll-call training. It addresses law enforcement situations involving people who have mobility disabilities, mental illnesses, mental retardation, epilepsy or seizure disorders, speech disabilities, deafness or hard of hearing, and blindness or low vision. The segments can be viewed at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/videogallery.htm#Anchor-Dial-47492>

This information was provided by the Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center (www.adagreatlakes.org)

New NCSET Parent Brief on Dropout Prevention

Students who drop out of school face a difficult future. They are more likely to be unemployed, incarcerated, and/or impoverished. For students with disabilities, the risks are intensified. “*The Role of Parents in Dropout Prevention: Strategies that Promote Graduation and School Achievement*” is a new parent brief available on the web site of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). The brief provides both background information on risk factors and strategies that families can use to promote school completion. <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=3135>

Transition Planning for Foster Youth

A recent edition of The Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education features an article on transition planning for foster youth. The article is titled “*Transition Planning for Foster Youth with Disabilities: Are We Falling Short?*” and can be found online at <http://www.specialpopulations.org/Chapters%20-%20Vol%2028-2%20TOC.htm>

REFERENCE POINTS, transition updates from the TATRA Project, is managed by PACER Center www.pacer.org as a joint technical assistance activity of the TATRA Project and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition www.ncset.org

Save the Dates Events & Training

JANUARY

The Art of Creating Opportunity: 12 New Tools for Students in Transition with Denise Bissonnette

January 25, 2007

The Hilton - Troy, 5500 Crooks Road in Troy, MI
FREE - Pre-registration required by January 18. Space is limited. More information at www.oakland.k12.mi.us, click on “Register Online,” then locate class. Questions on content: Cathy Schmidt, 248.209.2504. Sponsored by Oakland Schools and Oakland County Community Mental Health

FEBRUARY

Career & Technical Preparation Conference

February 11-13, 2007

Detroit Marriott

Sponsored by Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth & Ferris State University,

Metro Detroit Rehabilitation Association Training

“*Achieving Success with Hard to Place Populations*”

February 12, 2007

DeCarlo’s Banquet & Convention Center, Warren, MI

Contact: Terrie Hylton 248-706-2600

hyltont@michigan.gov

MARCH

Annual Transition Services Conference

“*Taking Care of Business*”

March 5-7, 2007

Bavarian Inn, Frankenmuth, MI

More information at: <http://www.michigantsa.com/>

APRIL

Workshop with Denise Bissonnette

April 11, 2007

Sponsored by Michigan Rehabilitation Association’s Job Placement Division

MAY

MI-AHEAD Conference

May 18, 2007

NASDSE Satellite Conference Series

For more information see the OSE-EIS Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/ose-eis>