



## Commencement Exercises at DJJ



### 2007 Graduating Class

The DJJ School District held Commencement Exercises on July 25 in the Birchwood Auditorium for 155 GED's and two diploma recipients, some who returned specifically for the occasion.

Terry Dozier, a motivational speaker to young people and a former 4-year starter on the University of South Carolina basketball team with a 12-year professional career, was the keynote speaker at the ceremony. He told DJJ students of his own youth and the troubles he faced growing up. And he encouraged the students to seek that which makes them stand out. "You have to find something that makes you unique, that makes you special," he said.

DJJ's Birchwood School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the district as a whole has been named a "Palmetto Gold School District" for the last three consecutive years by the State Department of Education.

## TASC Recognized for Innovation

The National Council of State Governments recently recognized DJJ's community Teen After-school Center (TASC) program as one of 10 finalists in its Southern Region for a

2007 "Innovations" award. The TASC program works with local community and faith-based organizations to establish after-school centers for teens around the state. The program is administered through the agency's Office of Community Justice.

The "Innovations" award program was created "to bring greater visibility to exemplary state programs and practices, and to facilitate the transfer of those successful experiences to other states."



TASC Sites Annual Awards

## TASC Luncheon

DJJ celebrated the accomplishments of its Teen After School Centers (TASC) during a recent luncheon at Saluda Shoals State Park. The program recognized outstanding TASC sites and community volunteers. National African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Bishop Preston Warren Williams, III also was recognized and spoke during the program.

DJJ has 19 TASC sites based in local churches, community centers and Boys and Girls Clubs that are staffed by local volunteers in communities around the state. The centers are part of DJJ's plan to engage local communities in working with at-risk youth to help combat delinquency.

## Rick Wessinger: One Of the "Best in the Business"

*Corrections Today*, the official membership publication of the national American Correctional Association (ACA) lauded DJJ's own Rick Wessinger in its annual "Best in the Business" issue in June. While praising Wessinger's work as director of our Chester County office, and his efforts at juvenile crime prevention, *Corrections Today* also recognized the way "Wessinger works for his community in many ways aside from his position at DJJ"--citing his extensive volunteer work in Chester County.



Wessinger is the third DJJ employee to receive this honor. In previous years, the magazine has recognized DJJ's Lois Jenkins, Stacey Atkinson and Margaret Barber among its "Best in the Business."

## DJJ Girls Transition Home

The opening celebration of DJJ's Girls Transition Home is scheduled for September 11 at 3 p.m. at the Willow Lane Activities Center and Chapel. The celebration includes a program and tours of the home. A unique housewarming concept is being used. Invited guests are invited to bring donations of household items for the home. The home will be opened for staff tours on September 12. Tour hours will be announced. For more information go to the DJJ Website: [www.state.sc.us/djj/transitionhome.html](http://www.state.sc.us/djj/transitionhome.html).