



Building a New Future (part one)

As anyone who has visited the Broad River Road complex in the last year can tell you, DJJ is undergoing a huge transformation. A much needed construction boom is underway at BRRC to replace our old dormitories, add new facilities, and even relocate the DJJ entrance to provide for more safety and convenience. So The Link is taking a look at some of this new construction in a two-part series. The first part will focus on our new DJJ dormitories; the second part will focus on our Community Connections Center and new entrance.

Safer, brighter, and conducive to rehabilitation

For over three decades, DJJ has been using the same dormitories on the Broad River Road complex. Most of these dorms date back even farther than that—to four decades or older.

Not only are these dorms old and worn down by use and time, but they are also dark and lack the solid security design that you would find in a more modern facility.

Designed very much like college dormitories, most current dorms are cramped and linear in nature. A juvenile correctional officer (JCO) stationed at any one point in the building has a difficult time observing activities of the youth.

So when DJJ first began to look at building new dorms, a focus group was organized to provide input on features that would assist agency leaders in selecting the best design in terms of safety and rehabilitative practices.

“We looked at security, lighting, treatment areas, living areas, everything you can imagine,” says DJJ’s Deputy Director of Rehabilitative Services, Jerry Adger. “We wanted to make

sure that all the people who were going to work in that building were happy with its design before we laid the first brick.”

The result is an effective “pod” design that completely divides housing into living and treatment areas with 10 juveniles in each pod. This pod design ensures that no more than 10 juveniles are ever in contact with one another in the dorm. And the new dorm structure (where rooms are located around central security stations) allows JCO’s to keep a close eye on juvenile activities, with limited blind spots. At the same time, juveniles themselves will have more privacy in the dorm (since they will now each have



their own separate room) and a brighter, larger living space.

“Each dorm has over 13,000 square feet of living space divided into three pods,” reports DJJ Support Services director Bill Evans. “Each pod has its own showers, classrooms, and a large open common area with lots of natural light. We even have an interior courtyard for staff and juveniles to use.”

The ultimate goal of the agency is to build 10 of these new dorms. Right now two are slated to open in August, with another two currently under construction. JROTC students from Birchwood will be housed in the new dormitories. The existing Cedar and Sigma dorms will be closed and students housed there will be relocated to the renovated Birchwood dormitories

“These new dorms have been a long time coming,” says Director Bill Byars. “When those doors start to open in August we’re going to have our staff and

THE LINK

A NEWSLETTER
FOR DJJ
EMPLOYEES

SUMMER
2008

FROM THE
DJJ OFFICE
OF
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

youth working and living in a much safer, pleasant, and more functional environment than we've ever had on this complex. It just makes sense."



JCO security station line-of-sight in an existing dorm



JCO security station line-of-sight in one of the new dorms

High School Graduation

DJJ held commencement exercises for its 161 high school graduates (GED recipients) on July 16 at Birchwood High School on the Broad River Road Complex. Some of the students, along with their parents, returned specifically for this special occasion

Dr. Tremain Cooper, a pharmacist and motivational speaker, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Cooper, a Columbia native, shared his experience of growing up in foster care after being abandoned by his biological parents. He empowered the graduates to, "believe in yourself." He added: "You have the opportunity to change your life by creating a plan to do just that." DJJ's Birchwood Middle and High schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and for the third consecutive year were named a Palmetto Gold School District by the State Department of Education.

Fairy Tale Classic "Sleeping Beauty"

The princess "Sleeping Beauty" was awakened by a kiss - and thunderous applause from the audience of DJJ students. The applause showed appreciation for the Rock and Roll, Hip Hop stage version of the

fairy tale classic that featured a royal beauty more like Brittany Spears than Belle.

The performance by the Columbia Children's Theatre (CCT) was made possible through a Distinguished Arts Program grant from the South Carolina Department of Education. The professional theatre cast brought two performances of "Sleeping Beauty" to DJJ's Birchwood Auditorium in June to lively, yet well-behaved audiences.

Prior to the stage performance, CCT conducted a one week residency in improvisational theatre with the boys and girls. Students were introduced to the principles of creative expression and sketch comedy based on Chicago's Second City Improvisation Institute.

"The students were eager and very receptive to this form of expression," said CCT's Artistic Director Larry Stevenson. "Working with this particular population of students is very in line with our mission of creating theatre that crosses cultural and generational boundaries."

Community Intramural Sports Program



Game Awards

DJJ's Coastal Region recently held a basketball tournament at the Colleton County Recreation Center, featuring team members from the community. Wayne Bennett, director, DJJ's Colleton County Office, organized and directed the tournament. About 125 family members, friends, community supporters, and DJJ staff were in attendance. Six teams of 55 youth with DJJ involvement participated.

In the championship game between the Beaufort Celtics and the Allendale Tigers, the Tigers took an early and commanding lead and then



cruised to a 38-20 victory to take the trophy for Allendale County.

With a greater focus being placed by the agency on community intramural sports, expect more hoop action in the future.

DJJ's Juveniles Experiencing Excellence Program opens in Kershaw County

On Tuesday, July 8, DJJ announced the opening of its 19th Juveniles Experiencing Excellence Program (JEEP) site, which is housed at the Camden Middle School. JEEP is an employability and life skills program for youth ages 14-18 that are on probation, parole, or at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Through JEEP, juveniles are provided 10 weeks of classroom work in life, social, team building, and job preparation skills before they are placed in an 80-hour on-the-job paid internship position within their community.

New County Directors

Robert E. Beattie has been appointed the new director of DJJ's Beaufort County Office. Beattie most recently held the position of intensive supervision officer for Beaufort and Jasper counties. He began his juvenile justice career as a Community Specialist in Beaufort.

Ampt M. Murray has been appointed the new director of DJJ's Oconee County Office. Murray has been with the agency since 2001 and has served as a community specialist and intensive supervision officer in the Greenville County Office. He obtained a masters degree in management in 2007 from Southern Wesleyan University. Murray will also be serving as the intake officer for the county.

Placement/Classification Team Recognized



Team members (left to right): Sandra Nelson, Theresa Holland, Margaret Gertsch, Mary Lou Chiles, Judge Byars, Alesia Eady, Bernard Edwards

Gateway Boy's Group Home Staff Thanked for Service to The Facility, Which Recently Closed.



Community Connections Center Grand Opening Celebration

Private Showing for DJJ Employees

When: *Friday, September 5, 2008*
What: DJJ Employees CCC Reception
Purpose: A private showing (drop-in) for DJJ employees
Where: CCC Assembly area and garden
Time: 11:30-1:30

Gospel Fest and Cookout

When: *Saturday, September 6, 2008*
What: Gospel Fest
Purpose: To create faith based connections with youth, families, and agency personnel
Where: CCC Assembly area and garden
Time: 9-2 pm

Grand Opening "Celebrating Our Community Connections"

When: *Saturday, September 6, 2008*
What: Grand Opening
Purpose: Celebrating Our Community Connections
Where: CCC Assembly area and garden
Time: 3-6 pm

Family Worship Service and Lunch

When: *Sunday, September 7, 2008*
What: Family Worship Service
Purpose: To host the first worship service in the CCC
Where: CCC Assembly area and garden
Time: 10-12:30



SC Green Step School awards New Directions



Debbie Blackmon, center, holding the award

3rd Annual TASC Luncheon Held



TASC Site of the Year Representative Dean Page

After attending a 'Take Action Today' workshop in 2007, teacher Debbie Blackmon walked away believing that the South Carolina Green Step program would not only teach her students about conserving and protecting the environment, but it could also teach them hands-on skills they could take home and hopefully use. As a result, New Directions School chose gardening as one of the steps they pursue.

"Every time my students and I would work towards something to meet our goal on completing the garden, another idea would come up," said Ms. Blackmon. "My students were not only excited about starting their vegetable and flower gardens but they wanted to do more." For the project, plants were grown from seeds and then placed in the classroom, in which another step called indoor air quality was met.

South Carolina Green Step Schools is a program that encourages individual schools to take annual steps toward becoming more environmentally responsible by completing a large project in one or more of the categories: conservation, protection, or restoration.

In May, New Directions School became a South Carolina Green Step School by not only completing the program's one required step, but three additional steps. The steps completed were composting, gardening, indoor air quality, and forestry. The school was recognized for its accomplishment at a 'Take Action Today' workshop in. In addition to becoming a SC Green Step School, New Directions School also became a certified National Wildlife Schoolyard Habitat in the process. Congratulations!

The third annual DJJ Teen After-School Center (TASC) award luncheon was held on July 24th at the Saluda Shoals Park, River Center in Columbia. Awards were presented to 29 sites in appreciation for their service to our youth over the past year. A student from each site was also awarded with the student of the year for their achievements in the program and in their communities. Approximately 200 guests registered for the event.

South Carolina State Senator Gerald Malloy and South Carolina Representative Jerry Govan spoke at the event and offered inspirational words for the TASC staff and students in attendance.

A site was recognized from each region for top honors:

Piedmont East Region- Boys & Girls Club of Spartanburg

Piedmont West Region- Upstate Circle of Friends

Coastal Region-Youth Empowerment Services, Inc.

Midlands Region-Orangeburg Area Boys & Girls Club

Site of the Year was presented to:

Dean Page of Successful After-School Sites, Inc. of Dillon, SC.

Special Awards were also presented to South Carolina State Senator Gerald Malloy and South Carolina Representative Jerry Govan for their long-term commitment and outstanding support of TASC.